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EGYPTIAN PAPYRI AND
PAPYRUS-HUNTING

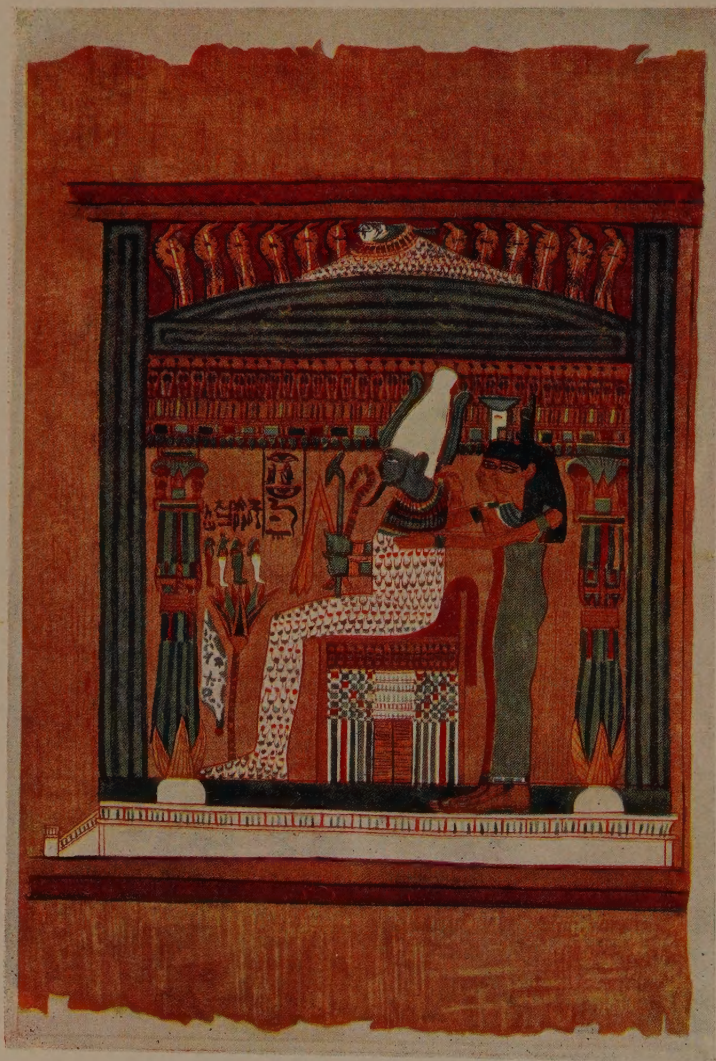
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By James Baikie, F.R.A.S.

A CENTURY OF EXCAVATION IN PALESTINE
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Osiris in a Shrine.
The Four Children of Horus on a Lotus Flower in front ;
Isis and Nephthys behind.

Part of Vignette from Papyrus of Ani.

(By kind permission of the British Museum).

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EGYPTIAN PAPYRI AND PAPYRUS-HUNTING

BY
JAMES BAIKIE, F.R.A.S.

AUTHOR OF "A CENTURY OF EXCAVATION IN EGYPT,"
"THE LIFE OF THE ANCIENT EAST," "THE SEA-KINGS
OF CRETE," ETC.

WITH
THIRTY-TWO ILLUSTRATIONS
OF WHICH FOUR IN COLOUR ARE BY
CONSTANCE N. BAIKIE

LONDON
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PREFACE

IN the preface to *A Century of Excavation in Egypt* it was explained that the omission of any notice of work among the Papyri was due to the fact that the literature of the subject had grown to such an extent as to make any survey of it impossible, save in a volume specially devoted to Papyri alone ; and the issue of such a volume was foreshadowed.

The present volume is an attempt to carry out the forecast. Only an attempt, however, for though the subject has the volume to itself, little more than its fringes has been touched ; and the reader who may perchance find any interest in the material presented in the following chapters may rest assured that for each story of the past, each fragment of ancient history or poetry, each personal document which he finds here, and which brings before his mind the real life of the dead centuries, there are scores of others, of equal interest, waiting to reward his further searching. Such a book as the present cannot and does not aim at completeness ; its highest object is to be an elementary introduction, perhaps a provocation, to the further study of the great subject with which it deals ; and its only merit lies in the fact that it presents its reader

with samples of the wealth of an almost inexhaustible treasure-house which is open to his pillaging. In writing it I have constantly felt that my work was not unlike that of the child whom Botticelli has pictured in his "Vision of St. Augustine," attempting with a spoon to bale the sea into the little hole which he has dug in the sand; my hope is that from the pool some of my readers may turn to the boundless ocean beyond. My debts to the great masters of the different aspects of the subject are manifest in every chapter. In the section devoted to the Ancient Papyri, I owe most, perhaps, to the invaluable *Ancient Records* of Professor Breasted, and to his *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*; but my debt to Professor Eric Peet is also great. In the Græco-Roman section, my chief debt, overshadowing all others, is to the works of Messrs. Grenfell and Hunt, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, *The Tebtunis Papyri*, and the other publications of a wonderful series. *The Flinders Petrie Papyri*, the *Greek Papyri in the British Museum*, and other publications of a similar sort have also been of great help; while the two charming little volumes of Professor Milligan, *Selections from the Greek Papyri*, and *Here and There among the Papyri*, should be in the hands of every one who is interested in the subject.

My thanks are gratefully recorded to the Trustees of the British Museum for permission to copy in colour those portions of vignettes from the Papyrus of Ani, and that of Hunefer, which

form the colour plates of the book, and also for permission to use Plates VII and IX; to the Council of the Egypt Exploration Society for permission to use the material of Plates XXIV to XXXII inclusive; to Professor Sir Flinders Petrie, D.C.L., F.R.S., for permission to use Plate XXIII (from *Hawara, Biahmu, and Arsinoë*); and to A. Y. Steel, Esq., for the photographs used in Plates VI, XI, and XVI.

JAMES BAIKIE.

ST. JOHN'S MANSE,
TORPHICHEN.

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BOOK I
ANCIENT PAPYRI

EGYPTIAN POPYRI AND PAPYRUS-HUNTING

CHAPTER I

THE PAPYRUS, AND ITS USE AS A WRITING MATERIAL

AMONG the unknown benefactors of the human race who have bequeathed to us the greater discoveries by which the advancement of life has been made possible, not the least honoured place is due to the genius who first discovered and utilised the qualities of the papyrus plant as a material on which to write. It is difficult for us, to whom paper has become almost an encumbrance, and the multiplication of books an additional burden added to life, to realise the immensity of the debt which we owe to the active mind which conceived the idea that the thin pellicles of the papyrus plant, written upon with a pen or brush made out of a bruised reed, would provide a means of recording facts and thoughts, less durable, indeed, than the record incised with infinite pains upon hard stone or clay, yet lasting enough for all ordinary

purposes, and infinitely easier and more practical for all the common uses of life. Yet, without this simple invention, a real literature, in the sense in which we understand the word, would have been practically impossible.

It is easy enough for us, now that the problem has long been solved, and the fittest medium for the preservation of writing selected by the experience of many centuries, to see that the rival Babylonian method of the stylus and the clay tablet was the blindest of all blind alleys, the following of which could only have led to the cramping and final death of all true literature ; but it was by no means so easy to see this four thousand years ago. For long it seemed as though the clay tablet and the cuneiform script were to carry the day, as against the papyrus-roll and the reed-pen and ink. Even as late as the time of the Tell el-Amarna Letters (1400 B.C.), the diplomatic correspondence of the ancient East was carried on by means of tablets of clay incised with the cuneiform script of Babylonia, and Pharaoh of Egypt himself, apparently, had to conform to the universal practice, and have his letters to his brother monarchs written, not on the material native to his land, but on that which fashion most unreasoningly favoured.

The imagination sinks before the attempt to realise the dreadful fate from which we have been delivered by the final triumph of the papyrus-roll over its weighty and cumbrous rival. Even as it is, books can sometimes be an almost intolerable burden ; what would they have been,

if, for each printed page, a tablet of baked clay had to be substituted? Lord Macaulay has put the case as it might have been, perhaps with somewhat elephantine humour, but not unjustly, in his essay on the Royal Society of Literature. "About four hundred years after the Deluge," he says, "King Gomer Chephoraod reigned in Babylon. He united all the characteristics of an excellent sovereign. He made good laws, won great battles, and whitewashed long streets. He was, in consequence, idolised by his people, and panegyrised by many poets and orators. A book was then a serious undertaking. Neither paper nor any similar material had been invented. Authors were therefore under the necessity of inscribing their compositions on massive bricks. Some of these Babylonian records are still preserved in European museums; but the language in which they are written has never been deciphered. Gomer Chephoraod was so popular that the clay of all the plains round the Euphrates could scarcely furnish brick-kilns enough for his eulogists. It is recorded in particular that Pharonezzar, the Assyrian Pindar, published a bridge and four walls in his praise."

To say nothing of the shocking archæology of the quotation, its humour may seem almost as lumbering as the eulogies of the Babylonian sovereign; but the essential fact is scarcely exaggerated. From libraries whose shelf-room must be reckoned by hundreds of acres, and from newspapers and magazines, each copy of which would require a motor-lorry for its transport, and a steam-crane for its delivery, we have been

mercifully delivered by the happy thought of the unknown Egyptian who first took a scrap of papyrus fibre, and scrawled rude characters on it with a bruised reed dipped in soot and water.

The plant which was destined to be the instrument of so great a deliverance was the *Cyperus papyrus*, L., a kind of sedge, now no longer to be found in Egypt, though it is still plentiful in the Soudan, where it reaches a height of 25 feet. There is no reason to suppose that its growth was so luxuriant in the more northerly part of the Nile Valley, and a height of 8 or 10 feet may have been more normal; but, at all events, in ancient days it must have been prevalent over a great part of the land, and especially in the swamps of the delta. This prevalence caused it to be adopted, at a very early stage of national history, as the emblem of Lower Egypt, as the Lotus became the corresponding emblem of the Upper division of the kingdom. The tall graceful plant is constantly seen in the hands of the Egyptian goddesses, as their emblem of divinity, and its clustered buds gave to the Egyptian architect one of his most successful architectural motives, in the shape of the papyrus-bud columns so common in the colonnades of the great temples of the empire.

The method of preparation of papyrus from the papyrus plant was as follows. The outer covering of the plant being stripped off, the inner part was found to consist of a succession of layers or pellicles of a whitish papery nature, the fibres, of course, running vertically up the stem. The first of these layers being peeled off



II. BABYLONIAN DELUGE TABLETS.

gave a strip of tissue, whose breadth depended on the thickness, while its length was in proportion to the height, of the plant. This strip of tissue was laid down vertically to form the outer layer of the papyrus. A second strip was then taken and laid across the first, at right angles to it, so that the fibres now ran horizontally. Pliny states that Nile water was then used to moisten the two layers and fasten them together, owing to the fact that it possessed in its muddy condition the qualities of glue ; but there is no reason to suppose that this was the case, and, as a matter of fact, traces of gum or glue have been found between the two layers of various papyri. It may very well be that the Egyptians, wishing to keep to themselves the monopoly of a trade so lucrative as the manufacture of papyrus, may have encouraged the idea of the glutinous properties of Nile water, as making it the only medium suitable for the purpose.

The double sheet of tissue thus obtained varied, of course, in size according to the size of the plants from which it had been obtained. A common size for documents merely destined for ordinary use was 5 to $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches in width, and 9 to 11 inches in height ; but sheets which were to be used for writings of greater importance or sacredness were of much more stately proportions, attaining a height sometimes of 16 to 18 inches. Sheet could be added to sheet, as required, until a roll of the needed length was produced ; and this was sometimes very considerable. Thus the Harris Papyrus No. 1 in the British Museum measures 133 feet in length by

16½ inches in height, and it is run pretty close for size by a copy of the Book of the Dead, which measures 123 feet in length by 18½ inches in height. These are, of course, exceptional sizes, though there is in existence one papyrus-roll 11 feet longer than even the Great Harris Papyrus. A very common size for a papyrus-roll was twenty sheets, and such a roll might run anything from 10 to 20 feet in length.

Before being used for writing, the papyrus sheets were polished with a smooth polisher of bone or shell. Even after undergoing this preparation, however, there was naturally a difference between the two sides of the sheet. The side on which the fibres ran horizontally was smoother and better for writing upon than the other, on which the fibres ran vertically. Accordingly it was the former side which was generally used, the latter being only called into use for subsidiary purposes, such as an address, or when the space on the other side of the sheet had been used up. In speaking of the two sides of a sheet it is customary to use the terms *recto* and *verso*, the *recto* being the side on which the fibres run horizontally, and the *verso* that on which they run vertically.

As can be inferred from the method of its production, papyrus was by no means a cheap article. We have comparatively little information as to its usual market cost; but from one inscription relating to the expenses of the rebuilding of the Erechtheum at Athens in 407 B.C., it appears that at that time in Athens two sheets of papyrus cost one drachma and two

obols each, or a little over a shilling. Its costliness explains the frequency with which the *verso* is used in ordinary documents when the space afforded by the *recto* has been used up, and also the custom of writing another document of quite different tenor on the *verso* of a sheet, whose *recto* has already been used. Thus, in a late example (A.D. fourth century), we find a man writing a private letter on the back of a business document—"not being able at the moment to find a clean sheet, I have written on this"; while in the case of one of the Oxyrhynchus papyri, which on its *recto* gives the intimation of the death of a certain Panechotes, son of Cephalas, the *verso* has been used for the writing of a school exercise in which some schoolboy of Oxyrhynchus sets down, in a very bad piece of handwriting and with many corrections, such highly proper copy-book maxims as "Do nothing mean or ignoble or inglorious or cowardly." In some cases, before the sheet was used for its new purpose, the writer took the trouble to go over the papyrus with a wet sponge, and efface, so far as possible, the original writing.

In spite of the admirable quality of the ink used by the ancient Egyptian scribe, the process of washing-out was apparently quite an easy one. It was frequently resorted to, not only for the purpose of preparing a sheet for new writing, but for quite another purpose. The ancient Egyptian had a profound belief in the magical virtue of the written word, and one of his favourite ways of possessing himself of knowledge was to wash off in beer the writing of any roll

whose contents he wished to make infallibly his own, subsequently drinking the beer. He thus literally absorbed the knowledge which he desired to possess. Thus when Prince Na-nefer-kaptah had got possession of the magic Book of Thoth, he made a copy of the whole book, washed off the ink with beer, and drank the beer, "and so he knew everything that had been written in the Book of Thoth"; while at the close of the famous legend which tells how Isis stole the great name of Ra, it is written: "Let it be written down, and dissolve the writing in beer, and let the beer be drunk; or let it be written on a piece of linen, and worn for an amulet about the neck."

The tools of the scribe were simple, and were carried in a palette, made of wood, ivory, slate, or alabaster. The palette varied in length from 8 to 16 inches, and in breadth from 2 to $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches. At the upper end it was furnished with a number of sunk oval hollows to hold the various coloured inks or paints. Down the middle of the palette beneath the ink-holes, ran an oblong slot, deep at one end and shallowing towards the other, in which the reed pens or brushes were placed, and were kept fast by a cross-piece of wood, or by a sliding cover. In the palmy days of the Egyptian scribe, when his occupation was a divine mystery, the palette would often bear an inscription containing the name of its owner, and an invocation to Thoth, who was revered as the inventor of the art of writing. For common or business purposes, the palette of the writer was a very simple one; but in the case of the

scribes who had to do with more elaborate writings, such as the illuminated copies of the Book of the Dead, with their variously coloured inks, and their brilliant vignettes, the palette had to be much more amply provided. That of an official of Thothmes IV, now in the British Museum, contains twelve hollows for ink, with two additional ones in the centre line ; and from this elaborate provision the palettes vary down to the simple pen-case, with one hollow for black ink.

Professor Milligan remarks of the inks used : " The marvellous way in which the ink has preserved its colour invariably attracts attention, and shows that anything in the nature of adulteration must have been unknown." The black ink was made of lamp-black or powdered charcoal, mixed with water in which a small proportion of gum had been dissolved. With regard to the coloured inks or paints, white was derived from lime-white, blue from lapis-lazuli powder, green from sulphate of copper, red and yellow from mineral earths. The scribe was in the habit of grinding his own colours on a stone slab, which probably accounts for their good lasting quality. When they were ready he applied them to the papyrus by means of reed pens, or rather (in the earlier period), brushes. These were from 8 to 10 inches long, and from a sixteenth to an eighth of an inch in diameter ; and the writing end was bruised, not cut, at least in the earlier periods. Later a thicker reed was used, and the point was cut, as with a quill-pen.

When the writing had been completed, the roll of papyrus was kept secure and in shape by a cord tied in a bow round the middle, and in the case of documents of importance this cord was sealed with its owner's name or cognisance stamped in clay. These rolls were then kept in wooden cases, or sometimes in earthenware pots. At a late stage in the history of papyrus as a writing material, the roll form was abandoned for the more convenient book or codex form, in which the sheets are arranged in successive pages as in a modern book. This custom began to arise, in all probability, not later than the first century of our era, and with comparative rapidity superseded the more cumbrous and inconvenient roll form. For documents to which frequent reference had to be made, as in the case of the early copies of the New Testament Scriptures, the advantage of the new system, in which reference could at once be made to a particular page, over the old roll, which provided no clue to the searcher, was obvious. Accordingly, we find that while the writings of classic authors continued for long to be written in roll-form, the book or codex form was early adopted for the circulation of the Scriptures, and most of the earliest New Testament books written on papyrus are in this form.

So convenient a material as papyrus must early have gained for itself an assured place among Egyptian exports. We have already seen its presence and its price at Athens in 407 B.C. Seven hundred years earlier, we find that among the articles which were sent from Egypt to

Wenamou, the unfortunate envoy of Herhor to the court of Zakar-Baal of Byblos, to enable the messenger of Amen to secure the cedar logs which were wanted for the barge of the Theban God, were five hundred rolls of fine papyrus ; and there can be little doubt that the ledgers to which the eminently businesslike Prince of Byblos referred to show Wenamou that past grants of cedar had not been made without payment were written on the same substance. Unfortunately, while papyrus, when not exposed to frequent handling, or to the action of damp, is a remarkably durable material, damp and rough usage are fatal to it. The consequence is that, with the exception of the calcined rolls which were found at Herculaneum in 1752, papyri have been found only in the country of their origin. The dry climate and the sandy resting-place which have preserved so many priceless objects in Egypt have afforded the ideal conditions for the preservation of papyri of all ages, from the earliest trace of the appearance of the papyrus about 3500 B.C., till the last trace of its use far on in the Byzantine period. In fact, the word Egyptian in the title of this book is almost tautological ; there are no papyri extant which are not Egyptian papyri.

CHAPTER II

THE USE OF THE PAPYRUS IN ANCIENT EGYPT

AT this point it would seem advisable to indicate the great distinction between the two chief periods during which papyrus was used. The remarkable discoveries made within the last thirty years at Elephantine, the Fayum, Oxyrhynchus, and elsewhere, of papyri written in Aramaic, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, have attracted so much attention, and have proved so valuable, that to many papyri are only associated with those fragments of documents from the Græco-Roman and Roman periods which have given us our earliest copies of certain portions of the New Testament, portions of collections of the sayings of Jesus Christ, and versions of parts of the writings of many of the great classical authors, and, by preserving also scores of private letters, have given us an insight into the ordinary life of the period in question which could have come in no other way. The mention of papyri suggests some tattered fragment, dug from the rubbish-heaps of some Egyptian town, bearing perhaps a few verses of a Gospel, perhaps a scrap of some royal proclamation, some summary of a lawsuit, or, more interesting still, some letter

whose faded ink still has the power to bring before the reader the loves or hates, the hopes or fears of a human heart which has been dust and ashes for two thousand years.

It ought to be remembered, however, that all these papyri of the Græco-Roman and later periods, strictly speaking, do not belong to the history of ancient Egypt at all. They are, so to speak, only the relics of a single hour of the late evening of Egypt's long and glorious day. Ancient Egyptian history, in the true sense, had ceased to be before they began to be written; the long succession of the Thirty Dynasties had at length drawn to a close, and the greatest of Oriental kingdoms was being ruled by monarchs of Western race. The very language in which the thoughts of the greatest race of the ancient East had for four thousand years been expressed and recorded was being deposed from its pride of place, and superseded by a modern upstart. The Ptolemaic and Roman papyri have, as we shall see, a very remarkable interest and value of their own; but they are things of yesterday compared with the really ancient Egyptian papyri. In its last development the papyrus held its own, more or less, for about a thousand years; but its earlier history covers at least three times as long.

The really ancient Egyptian papyrus, then, was written, not in Greek, Aramaic, or Latin, like the papyri of the later period, but in native Egyptian, the old language which has come down, not indeed unchanged, but essentially the same, through all the changes which marked the Old

and Middle Kingdoms, and the New Empire. The form of script in which it was written might be either hieroglyphic, the beautiful old picture-script of the Egyptians, or hieratic, the cursive script which was evolved from hieroglyphic as the latter was found to be too cumbrous and difficult for the common uses and swift needs of daily life, or demotic, the still more abbreviated and simplified form of cursive which came into use when even hieratic was found too elaborate for ordinary business, and for purposes where quick writing was necessary. But not only are the language and the script different from those of the later period; the condition of the document itself generally adds another and very marked distinction. Of course any document which has come down to us through thousands of years, which has perhaps been buried for many centuries in a tomb, then dug up, and possibly passed, not too gently, from the hands of one native dealer to those of another or of many others, before it finds its rest in some great museum, must be in a highly fragile, and often imperfect condition. Even the most perfectly preserved of ancient papyri bears evidence of its great age, and of the vicissitudes which have marked its history, in the shape of cracks and tears, while often large portions of the roll are defective or missing, the portions lacking being frequently just those which we would most fain possess—the opening passage which gives the setting of all which follows, or the conclusion which sums up all that has gone before. But the condition of even the worst preserved of

ancient papyri is almost perfection compared with the tattered scraps which the papyrus-hunter of to-day painfully unearths from the rubbish-heaps of some old Egyptian town, where the torn and crumpled contents of the waste-paper baskets of the business houses and law offices have been dumped for generations, side by side with the forgotten correspondence of dozens of private individuals. A great Egyptian papyrus of the empire, with its 50 to 100 or 120 feet of material elaborately covered with exquisitely written hieroglyphics, or almost equally beautiful hieratic script, and its wonderfully illuminated vignettes, is a great work of art, as well as an invaluable document ; without previous information as to its character and value, nobody would look twice at the dingy and tattered rag of Græco-Roman papyrus which may be the most priceless reward of months of anxious labour at Oxyrhynchus or Antinoë.

We have to do, then, in the first place, with these larger and more complete survivals which have come down to us, through various channels, from the really ancient Egypt of the dynastic periods ; thereafter we shall have to deal with the not less valuable, but more fragmentary survivals of the later period of the Greek and Roman occupation.

It is impossible to say when the Egyptian first attained to the regular practice of writing ; but the fact that the calendar was introduced by 4241 B.C. is sufficient proof that it must have been in habitual use for some time before such matters as the settlement of a calendar could be

worked out. Already in the tomb of Mena at Abydos, hieroglyphics, legible, though archaic, are found engraved upon an ebony label. Before the end of the Ist Dynasty, not only the elaborate engraved hieroglyphic, but also a cursive linear script was in use, and the hieroglyphics themselves are beginning to be handled with greater freedom, not to say carelessness. Probably it would not be rash to say that the introduction of the very earliest forms of writing in Egypt can scarcely be brought down much later than 5000 B.C. That, of course, is not to say that papyrus was in use by that time. The earliest written papyrus extant does not date from earlier than about 3000 B.C. ; but the figure of a roll of papyrus occurs among the hieroglyphic signs at a much earlier period than that, and accordingly we must assume that the material was in common use long before it took its place as a conventionalised hieroglyphic sign. Perhaps 4000 B.C. would not be too early to take as a possible date for the beginnings of its use. Probably the invention of the prepared sheet was not delayed very long, once the cumbrousness and inconvenience of stone and wood for purposes of ordinary writing came to be recognised. The abundance of the plant must have made the discovery of this particular one of its many uses merely a matter of time, and not very long time.

Stone and wood continued to be used for many of the purposes of writing, and especially for the long historical inscriptions in which the Pharaohs delighted, and which were not only

designed for the glorification of the monarch who caused them to be engraved, but were also used as part of the decorative scheme of the various buildings on whose walls they were cut—a purpose for which the hieroglyphs were admirably suited, particularly as they were not only engraved, but also illuminated with the natural colours of the objects which they represented. From the very dawn of Egyptian history till its close we find stone thus used as a medium for the more elaborate and stately productions of the Egyptian scribe. Wood, also very commonly used in the earlier periods, was especially used in the time of the Middle Kingdom as a medium for the inscription of the ritual texts which were then held to be necessary for the well-being of the dead in the Underworld; but thereafter its use is not so common, and even for these specifically religious purposes the papyrus-roll begins to take its place. Sheepskin or goatskin, parchment, in fact, was sometimes used as a writing material. We learn from the inscription of Rekhmara, the Vizier of the great Pharaoh, Thothmes III, that the codified laws of Egypt, in accordance with which all legal questions had to be decided, were written on skin or parchment of some sort. “The forty skins,” says the old Prime Minister, “shall be open before him.” The fact that leather was also sometimes used for writing upon is established, curiously enough, by the accident which has preserved to us a scribe’s practice-copy of the account which Senusert I caused to be drawn up of his founding of the great temple of Ra at Heliopolis. The

splendid stele on which the story was doubtless engraved has long since perished; but the scribe's copy of the inscription, written on a roll of leather, has survived, and is now in the Berlin Museum. But, on the whole, animal substances, such as leather or parchment, were very little used by the Egyptians, for the natural reason that in the fibres of their papyrus plant they had found something infinitely handier, and less troublesome to prepare, better to write upon, and almost as durable.

The papyrus, then, had its special place and function. It was not the medium, generally speaking, for the transmission of great historical records, which the Pharaohs preferred to write "with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond," in the words of the old Hebrew prophet. But for all other purposes, in which writing had to be done at length or with greater speed than was possible with inscriptions which had to be laboriously engraved in enduring material, the papyrus was obviously the only medium worth considering. Wherever you had to deal with literature in the true sense, as distinct from the mere historical record, with the art of fiction in which the Egyptian so early and so fruitfully exercised his genius, giving to the world, as we are only now beginning to realise, the germs of much of the romantic story-telling which has charmed so many generations since; wherever you had to deal with those first gropings after the finest and tersest expression of the deepest feelings of the heart which only poetry can really body forth, and which still charm us,

even in the uncouth cloak of an alien tongue, and across the gulf of thirty centuries; or wherever the practical philosopher (Egypt had no speculative ones) had to seek the preservation of his canny and unheroic maxims for the guidance of future generations—in all these cases it was to the papyrus that the seeds of the first literature had to be committed.

Then there was all that realm, beyond the border of true literature, where permanent record is needed for the statement and preservation of knowledge, or in some cases of what was then believed to be knowledge, or something more precious even than mere human knowledge; and the papyrus was again called in for the recording of mathematical and astronomical facts, for the transmission and perpetuation of what the doctors of three thousand years ago deemed science as to the human frame and its ailments, and the recording of the weird and ghastly remedies with which they were wont to fight disease, and for the preservation of a still more priceless wisdom—the magic, white or black, which might avail when merely human skill had failed. Specimens of all these different classes of Egyptian literature and science—not so many as we could have wished, but still a considerable body of material—have been preserved for us, as they could scarcely have been in other ways, by the adaptable and durable papyrus.

Almost more important than any of its other services is that which the papyrus has rendered to us in the preservation of the record of what the ancient Egyptian of the time of the New Empire

thought on matters of religion, and especially on the question of the life beyond. No ancient people was so constantly preoccupied with the interests of the other world as was the Egyptian, and consequently the amount of material which has come down to us on the subject far exceeds all that has survived with regard to all other aspects of religious thought. Unfortunately, it cannot be said that, generally speaking, the value of the literature is in proportion to its quantity. A great deal of it is merely "vain repetition" of ritual statements of the most formal character, and still more of it descends even lower, and is only the expression of the most grovelling superstition, piling together heaps of charms, which by their magic power were supposed to avert all dangers, and secure all benefits to the fortunate possessor of them in the other world. Still, even so, there remains a residuum of real spiritual value, and even the rest has its own importance as evidence of the plane of thought and aspiration on which a race so acute and so richly endowed in other respects lived and moved in this aspect of its being.

Of course the revelations of the papyrus in this respect refer only to the later periods of Egyptian history. It was only when religion, at least in that aspect of it which most interested the Egyptian—the question of the after life—began to become a matter of general concern, instead of the peculiar privilege of the Pharaoh and his immediate court circle, that the knowledge and the power conferred by the teaching and the charms of the religious books began to be



III. EGYPTIAN SCRIBE'S WRITING MATERIALS (PAGE 20).
(Palettes with Writing Reeds and Ink-holes.)

disseminated in a form which enabled them to become the possession of anyone who could afford a copy, more or less complete, of the chapters which taught the mysteries of the Underworld. The earliest religious literature of the Egyptians was practically the exclusive property of the Pharaoh, who alone could claim a right to immortality. Consequently, with no need for its multiplication, it was recorded exclusively for the Pharaoh, and in a form suited to secure its permanence. The original text of one of the oldest chapters of the Book of the Dead, LXIV, has attached to it a rubric stating that it was found, engraved on a block of alabaster of the south, by the Prince Hordadef in the reign of the Pharaoh Menkaura, of the IVth Dynasty, while in another papyrus a still more venerable antiquity is attributed to the discovery, and it is linked with the name of the Pharaoh Hesepti of the Ist Dynasty. Whatever dependence may be put upon such statements—not very much, judging from the conflict of authority in the two papyri—it is certain that by the time of the Vth Dynasty (*c.* 2700 B.C.), the standard copies of Egyptian religious teaching with regard to the Underworld were engraved on the walls of the chambers of the Pyramids belonging to the Pharaohs of this period, and are found nowhere else. By the time of the Middle Kingdom (*c.* 2000 B.C.), this teaching, enlarged and extended, is no longer, as in the case of the Pyramid Texts, the property of the King alone, but is found written in ink upon the wooden coffins of the nobles and officials of the period,

for which reason it generally bears the name of the Coffin Texts.

So far the papyrus has had nothing to say with regard to the preservation of Egyptian religious teaching ; but with the rise of the New Empire (1580 B.C.), there comes a change. The Egyptian mind generally was being quickened at this period in many directions, and to many issues never before realised ; and with the other aspects of the awakening comes the sense that the blessings of immortality were not restricted to royalty and its immediate circle, but were attainable by all men, given the observance of the necessary conditions. Foremost among these conditions was that of the knowledge needed to enable a man to escape the dangers of the Underworld, to satisfy its Judges, and to find his way through its intricacies. This meant, of course, the multiplication of copies of the sacred texts which contained this knowledge ; and for such multiplication the papyrus-roll was the obvious, and only suitable material. From this time onwards, therefore, the religious texts referring to the Underworld are gathered together and written down in the form which we now know as The Book of the Dead, and every Egyptian who could afford enough to pay the scribe for even the most imperfect copy of the sacred texts carried with him to the grave a roll of papyrus, which might be only a short scrap, containing nothing more than the strictly essential chapters, or might be a stately document extending to a length of a hundred feet or more, and containing every provision that the wisdom of the Egyptian

scribe knew against the dangers of the dark world of the Duat. This is why nine out of every ten ancient Egyptian papyri are funerary papyri, and why nine out of every ten funerary papyri are copies of what we know as the Book of the Dead, the others being copies of the later variants and abbreviations of the main book—the Book of the Gates, the Book of Breathings, the Book of Knowing what is in the Underworld, and so forth.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST PAPYRUS-HUNTERS

PAPYRUS - HUNTING, in the modern sense, is a thing of the day before yesterday, so to speak. It dates from rather less than a century and a half ago ; for it was only in A.D. 1778 that the first discovery of which we have any record was made. This happened in the Fayum, a district which has ever since proved rich in papyri. Some fellahs, digging with no ulterior motive in their minds, accidentally came upon an earthenware pot, which contained about fifty rolls of papyrus. These were the dark ages, so far as regards interest in things Egyptological, and the discoverers could find no market for their unexpected treasure. Finally, all the rolls save one were burned by their discoverers, for the sake, so the story runs, of the aromatic smell which they gave out when burning. In spite of the poetic sanction which Browning has lent to the idea of the survival of such sweet aromas :

“ And strew faint sweetness from some old
Egyptian’s fine worm-eaten shroud
Which breaks to dust when once unrolled,”

Dr. Milligan has been prosaic and matter-of-fact enough to conduct an experiment with some fragments of papyrus whose result leads him "rather to doubt the 'aromatic' part of the story." Burned, however, the papyri certainly were. The one exception passed eventually into the hands of Cardinal Stefano Borgia. Being written in Greek, it was, of course, intelligible, and was published in 1778 under the title *Charta papyracea Græce scripta Musei Borgiani Velitris*. So far as intrinsic interest went, its contents were of very small importance, for it consisted merely of a record of the *corvée* on the embankment of the Nile for the season A.D. 191-2; still this was the first of such papyri ever published in Europe, and therefore it has the interest which always belongs to a pioneer production.

Papyrus-hunting, however, was an old game nearly two thousand years before the *Charta Borgiana* was ever heard of; and if we want to find the first record of it, we have ourselves to resort to an ancient papyrus, which was written in demotic characters, the most cursive script of Egypt, in the reign of one of the Ptolemies, probably Ptolemy II. There are two copies of the story; but one of them contains only a few broken phrases, which, however, have been of some importance in the reconstruction of the details of the narrative; while even the completer papyrus is defective, the two first out of its six pages being entirely wanting so that the setting of the narrative is lost. Fortunately, however, the course of the story is

sufficiently plain to make its reconstruction an easy task.

The papyrus deals with the adventures of an actual historical personage—Setna-Khaemuast (Setna-Glory-in-Thebes), the fifth son and the favourite of the famous Pharaoh, Ramses II of the XIXth Dynasty (1292–1225 B.C.). Setna, whose fine statue is one of the conspicuous objects in the Egyptian section of the British Museum, was High-Priest of the God Ptah, the Creator-god of Memphis, and had a great reputation for learning, which meant, in those days particularly, skill in the magic arts. His fame in this respect has made him the hero of two of the magic tales of ancient Egypt; while his more legitimate reputation as High-Priest of Ptah, and son of the great Ramses, has brought about the curious transformation in which, by a wonderful anachronism, Herodotus sets him before us as the King Sethon of Egypt, also a High-Priest of Ptah, whose piety was rewarded by the miraculous overthrow of Sennacherib's army.

This famous hero of Egyptian romance, then, is brought before us in the papyrus of the Cairo Museum, in the very act of robbing the tomb of an earlier magician-prince of the magic roll on which the power of the dead wizard had depended; and the story details not only the struggle between the two princes for the possession of the magic papyrus, but also how the roll originally came into the hands of the dead magician, and the chain of disasters which entangles the robber of the tomb, until at last

he is obliged to restore the roll to its rightful owner. In spite of the defective state of the papyrus at the beginning, we can understand that Setna has in some way heard of the magic roll which lies in the tomb of Prince Na-nefer-ka-ptah, the unidentified son of an unidentified Pharaoh, Mer-neb-ptah, who may perhaps be intended for the famous Pharaoh Amenhotep III of the XVIIIth Dynasty (1411-1375 B.C.). He has succeeded in penetrating into the tomb in the necropolis at Memphis, and finds himself in the presence, not only of Na-nefer-ka-ptah, but also of his wife Ahura, and his son Merab, or rather of the "*Kas*" or "*Doubles*" of the last two, whose bodies are buried not at Memphis but at Koptos, but whose *Kas* are able to visit the tomb of their beloved. Between the dead prince and his wife lies the magic roll of papyrus, whose presence fills the whole tomb with light.

On entering the tomb, Setna is challenged, and declares his intention to take the magic roll, if necessary, by force; and then Ahura, the dead wife of the dead magician, intervenes, and tells the story of how her husband had become possessed of the fateful book, and how dearly he and his loved ones had paid for it. Na-nefer-ka-ptah, she says, had learned of the existence of this magic book of the God Thoth—the Patron-God of the Egyptian scribe, and the inventor of letters and magic. It lay in the Nile beyond Koptos, and was guarded in a most wonderful fashion. Within an iron box was a bronze box; within the bronze box, a sycamore box;

within the sycamore box, one of ebony and ivory ; in the ivory and ebony box, a silver box ; in the silver box, a golden one ; and in the golden box, the magic Book of Thoth. This wonderful group of caskets was surrounded by a tangle of serpents, scorpions, and all sorts of reptiles ; and a deathless serpent watched over all. Sorely against his wife's will, Na-nefer-ka-ptah goes in search of the book, taking Ahura and their little son Merab with him, and by his own magic powers he succeeds in overcoming all the obstacles, slaying the deathless snake, and gaining possession of the coveted papyrus, which has powers as wonderful as the book of Michael Scott, so that its possessor knows what is said by the birds as they fly, and by the serpents as they crawl, and can enchant everything that is in heaven above or on the earth beneath.

Returning to Koptos, he allows his wife to read the magic roll. Then, in order to make sure that, whatever might happen to the actual roll, he should at least always possess the knowledge contained in it, he copies all the writing out word for word on a fresh papyrus, washes off the writing with beer, and drinks the beer, thus drinking in knowledge in the most literal sense.

Thoth, however, resented the stealing of his magic book, and on his complaint to Ra, the supreme God, Na-nefer-ka-ptah and his family were handed over to the offended god's vengeance. Thoth laid a curse upon them, and as their boat sailed north from Koptos, the little child Merab



IV. STATUE OF PRINCE KHAEMUAST.
(The earliest Papyrus-robber.)

fell into the river and was drowned. The sorrowing parents buried him at Koptos, and sailed north again ; but as they came to the fatal spot, the curse fell upon them once more, and Ahura, in her turn, was drowned. Finally, after burying his wife beside her son, Na-nefer-ka-ptah, unable to endure his sorrow, threw himself into the river, and the god's vengeance was accomplished. Ahura concludes her tale of woe thus : " I have told you all the mishaps which have befallen us on account of this book, of which you say, ' Give it to me ! ' You have no right to it, for because of it our time on earth has been cut short."

In spite of this pathetic appeal, Setna remorselessly insists on having the book. Na-nefer-ka-ptah suggests that the possession of the roll should be decided by a game of draughts, in which the dead prince is victor, and takes his vengeance upon Setna by burying the latter up to his neck in the ground. From this predicament, Setna is delivered by his foster-brother, who brings to his aid a talisman of the God Ptah, whose magic, as that of one of the supreme gods, is stronger than that of Na-nefer-ka-ptah, who is using the spells of the magic Book of Thoth. Setna then takes the book by force, for the ghosts cannot resist a living man. As he leaves the tomb, light goes before him, and darkness falls behind him, and Ahura wails out of the gloom, " Glory to the King of Darkness ! Glory to the King of Light ! All power is gone from our tomb ! " Na-nefer-ka-ptah, however, thinks differently. " Do not fret," he says ; " I

will make him bring back the book before long, with a forked stick in his hand, and a firepan on his head"—the Egyptian equivalent for "in sackcloth and ashes."

Meanwhile Setna, delighted with his new acquisition, spends all his time in reading it, and showing it to others; but when he told his father the Pharaoh what had happened, Ramses warned him: "If you are a wise man, you will put the book back in the tomb of Na-nefer-kaptah. Otherwise he will make you bring it back, with a forked stick in your hand, and a firepan on your head." But Setna is too proud of his victory to listen to reason, and ere long the vengeance of the dead wizard begins to work. Setna becomes infatuated with a beautiful girl, who appears to be a daughter of one of the priests of the goddess Bast, but is in reality the ghost of Ahura, become incarnate for the ends of revenge. As the condition of a union with her, she persuades him first to give her all his estate, next to disinherit his own children, and finally to cause them to be slain. In his madness he yields to her wishes, and as he sits drinking wine with the girl, he hears the dogs crunching the children's bones in the court without. Then, as he stretches out his arms to clasp his beloved, she gives a dreadful cry and vanishes, and Setna awakes to find himself lying in a miserable hovel, without a stitch of clothing to cover him.

Ashamed and frightened, he hastens back to his house at Memphis, and finds, to his delight, that it had all been a dream, and that his children are safe and sound. On his father's

advice, however, he concludes that it will be safer to restore the magic roll to its resting-place, and so with a forked stick in his hand and a firepan on his head he seeks the tomb again.

As he enters, Ahura cannot refrain from rubbing in the moral of his defeat, "Setna, you may thank the great God Ptah that you are here alive"; but Na-nefer-ka-ptah only chuckles, and remarks: "What did I tell you before?" The book is restored to its place, and immediately the whole tomb is filled with light. Setna then very humbly asks what penance is to be laid upon him for his attempt, and Na-nefer-ka-ptah tells him that he must go to the necropolis at Koptos, where the bodies of Ahura and Merab were buried, find them, and bring them down to Memphis, that the whole family may rest in peace in one tomb. This he accomplishes, after some difficulty. Pharaoh gives orders that the dead princess and her son shall be carried with all honour to the tomb of her husband, and when this has been done, the tomb is sealed, and the reunited family is left to the long sleep—unbroken, we may hope, by any other papyrus-hunters. The papyrus ends with a note: "This is the complete writing of the story of Setna-Khaemuast and Na-nefer-ka-ptah, and his wife Ahura, and their son Merab. It was written by the scribe Zeharpet, in the fifteenth year, in the month Tybi."

Such, then, is the first, and in many respects the most amazing, story of Egyptian papyrus-hunting. Wild assemblage of impossibilities though it may be, it is still worthy of being told,

not only because of its own merits as a story, which are not to be despised, but because of the light which it throws upon at least three of the rooted convictions and habits of Egyptian life. Its evidence as to the first of these—the whole Egyptian conception of the Underworld, and the conditions under which life goes on there—is beyond the scope of our present subject; but the other two have a direct bearing upon it. The first is the Egyptian habit of regarding tomb-robbery as the most natural thing in the world; the second, the Egyptian conviction that magic is just as natural and necessary a part of life as the air we breathe and the food we eat, and that one of the natural sources where its powers may be acquired is in the tomb, where the wisdom of past ages has been buried along with its practitioners.

Setna's action is the natural expression of these two factors. To him it is the most natural thing in the world that the magic roll of Thoth should be buried in the tomb of a dead wizard, and also the most natural thing in the world that he should break into the tomb, and rifle it of its treasure. And in both respects, he is simply a representative Egyptian. From the time, not so long after they were made, when the Royal tombs of the Ist Dynasty at Abydos were rifled and partly burned, down through the time of the pyramid-builders, when Khufu's mighty mausoleum proved no security to the dead king, and the time of the Ramessides, when "the august mummy of this God" (as the tomb-robbers reverently called King Sebek-em-saf whose body they were

despoiling), was stripped and burned, together with that of his wife, by rascals who made a regular trade of Pharaoh-robbing, down to the present day, when scientific excavation is rivalled, and sometimes, as in the case of the Der-el-Bahri *cache*, anticipated by the unauthorised efforts of the native practitioner, the Egyptian has been a tomb-robber by nature and practice. If he has always believed with all his heart that it is natural and right that the dead should have ample provision made for the supply of their wants in the Underworld, he has always believed just as assuredly that it is natural and right that when the treasures of the tomb have served the turn of the dead man, they should in due course be diverted to supply the wants of the living. This conviction has clung to him down through all the ages, and is as firmly rooted as ever in the mind of his present-day representative. "It is as natural," says one who knows the modern Egyptians well, "for them to scratch in the sand for antiquities as it is for us to pick flowers by the roadside"—a curious commentary on the protests against scientific excavation which have recently proceeded from modern Egypt.

We cannot suppose that Setna was the only representative of a race whose settled convictions were such as we have described to put these convictions into practice by the robbery of tombs for the sake of the papyri which they might contain. Many a tomb must have been invaded, as was that of Prince Na-nefer-ka-ptah, not only for the sake of the material treasures contained in it, but by some devotee of the magic arts,

who, like Setna-Khaemuast, was eager to obtain possession of the wondrous writing which would teach him how to enchant the heaven, the earth, the world of darkness, the mountains, and the rivers, and to know what the birds of the heaven say as they fly, and the reptiles as they crawl, and to see not only the sun and the moon shining in brightness, but the Gods who dwelt in their light. The modern papyrus-hunter is lured on by no such romantic hopes ; and yet the fruits of his labours have been scarcely less wonderful, in the recreation of all the long-dead life of those bygone days, than those which Setna wished to attain, while they have been much more solid and enduring.

CHAPTER IV

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN POPYRI IN MODERN TIMES

PAPYRUS-HUNTING, apart from such ancient researches as those of Setna, is, as we have already seen, a comparatively modern form of sport. No doubt the fellahs of Qurneh, whom Napoleon's expedition found living like Troglodytes in the rock-tombs on the west bank of the Nile at Thebes, and who had to be dislodged by a regular siege, must have found and destroyed many a treasure which would be of priceless value to the modern explorer; but of all that we have no record, and never shall have. The discoverers knew nothing of the importance and value of the material which they destroyed. There was then no market for these treasures of the past, and the fate of the potful of papyri from which the *Charta Borgiana* was rescued was doubtless the fate of many a roll of infinitely more importance and greater antiquity.

It was not until Napoleon's great expedition of 1798 had taught the world something of the amazing richness of Egypt in relics of the incredibly ancient past, that curiosity and interest began to be awakened to the extent of making it

worth while for the fellahin to preserve and sell the material which they discovered, instead of using it to feed their fires. Vivant Denon has left us, in a passage from his *Voyages dans la Basse et la Haute Egypte*, the ingenuous avowal of how complete was the ignorance of educated Europe with regard to the culture and the literature of ancient Egypt at the end of the eighteenth century. In one portion of a relief of Ramses III at Medinet Habu, he detects the image of a scribe writing. "The Egyptians then possessed books," he says; "the famous *Toth* must have been a book, and not tablets of inscriptions sculptured on walls—a matter which had been doubtful. I could not restrain a feeling of self-satisfaction in thinking that I was the first to make a discovery so important; but the feeling was still stronger when, a few hours afterwards, I was assured of the proof of my discovery by the possession of an actual manuscript which I found in the hand of a superb mummy which was brought to me: one must have the passion of curiosity, and be a traveller and a collector, to appreciate the full extent of such a delight."

The sequel, in which he describes the collapse of his moral integrity before the sore temptation offered by the first sight of a papyrus, is worthy of quotation, not only as the first modern record of such a discovery, but as illustrating the process by which many an honourable and otherwise worthy citizen has become the accomplice of the tomb-robbers of Thebes. The very presence of a notable "antika" seems to be a solvent of all normal ideas



V. STATUE OF RAMSES II.
(Black granite. Turin.)

Anderson, Rome.

of morality. "I was conscious," says the victim of temptation, "that I grew pale; I was just going to scold those who, in spite of my urgent requests, had violated the integrity of this mummy, when I perceived in his right hand and under his left arm the manuscript of papyrus-roll, which perhaps I should never have seen without this violation: my voice failed me; I blessed the avarice of the Arabs, and above all the chance which had arranged this good luck for me; I did not know what to make of my treasure, so much was I frightened lest I should destroy it; I dared not touch this book, the most ancient book so far known; I neither dared to entrust it to anyone, nor to lay it down anywhere; all the cotton of my bed-quilt seemed to me insufficient to make a soft-enough wrapping for it. Was it the story of this person? Did it tell the period of his life? Was the reign of the sovereign under whom he had lived inscribed there? Or did the roll contain theological dogmas, prayers, or the dedication of some discovery? Without realising that the script of my book was not known, any more than the language in which it was written, I imagined for a moment that I held in my hand the *compendium* of Egyptian literature—in a word the *Toth*."

What became eventually of the papyrus whose mere appearance excited such a tumult of emotion in the bosom of the famous French scholar, and produced such an instant deterioration in his moral standards, converting him in a moment from his Republican sense of the dignity of even dead humanity into a shameless pillager of

mummies, Denon does not tell us ; nor do we know what his wonderful roll contained. Probably, however, from his description of the position in which the roll was found, " under his left arm," we may conclude that the manuscript was a copy of the Book of the Dead, or some of its variants or abbreviations, such as the Book of Breathings, or the Book of the Gates. A quarter of a century was still to elapse before anything more could be made of such discoveries than was suggested by Denon's vague dreams ; and before Champollion's great discovery gave the key to the treasure-house of Egyptian literature, and changed each papyrus from a mere worthless curio into a human document, many scores, perhaps hundreds, of priceless papyri must have been unearthed, passed into the hands of curio-collectors and tourists, and, after lying for years in dusty seclusion between a stuffed monkey and a lump of coral, or some equally dignified association, been tossed into a heap of rubbish and lost for ever.

Even before the fellahin began to learn the marketable value of papyri, and to ransack the tombs and destroy the mummies in the hope of finding rolls, they had been using their dead ancestors as a source of profit. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the use of " mummia " was well established in medical practice, and as Sir Thomas Browne said, " Mummy is become merchandise, Misraim cures wounds, and Pharaoh is sold for balsams." In the end of the eighteenth century, there was apparently a regular

trade in mummy bitumen carried on by the fellahin of Qurneh. "They brought me fragments of mummy," says Denon. "I promised fancy prices in order to secure complete and intact specimens; but the avarice of the Arabs robbed me of this satisfaction. They sell in Cairo the resin which they find in the entrails and the skulls of these mummies, and they will not be hindered from tearing it out; moreover, the fear of handing over one which might contain treasure (though they have never found such a thing in these excavations), causes them always to break the wooden coffins, and to tear the wrappings of painted linen which, in important embalmments, cover the bodies." One can imagine the destruction which had been going on for centuries through this gruesome trade, and how it was multiplied by the discovery that not only was a mummy profitable as a store of bitumen, but also as a repository of the writings of infidels of old, for which the infidels of to-day (praise be to Allah, who made them such fools) were willing to pay hard cash.

It was now that there began that "unbridled pillage," as Maspero has called it with an honest indignation, which resulted, indeed, in the formation of the nuclei of the great Egyptian collections of most of the famous museums of Europe, and thus served the cause of science, but which also was responsible for the destruction of infinitely more than it preserved. Some of the famous collectors of these bad days of the early nineteenth century, indeed, were men of no little natural intelligence and insight, who, though they were

unable to read the precious documents which were offered to them, were at least able to see the necessity of taking care of their treasures, and of placing them eventually where they would be available for future study. Even a man like Belzoni, using methods which leave one aghast at their rashness and haphazardness, did not do all his work merely for private gain, and certainly displayed in his tasks a patience and an energy which could scarcely be surpassed, and a *flair* for a likely site or subject worthy of the most successful of modern explorers; while Passalacqua has been characterised by a famous modern excavator as "working with a full appreciation of the importance of detail, and a full realisation of the fact that the chief importance of finding an intact tomb lay in the opportunity of seeing exactly how each object was placed originally"—a thoroughly modern point of view. But men like Belzoni and Passalacqua were few. The bulk of the work was done, not in the true scientific spirit, but often with no higher motive than the forestalling of some rival, often simply with the object of getting spoils which could be disposed of to some passing tourist who wished to take back to Europe some relic of Egypt, as he was taking back relics of half a dozen other lands, and to whom the value or significance of his "antika" meant nothing; while every transgression of the European collector served as the excuse for more of the worst type of native pillage.

Belzoni has told us how in his days the fellahs of Qurneh found the tombs of their forefathers

a much more profitable estate than their own fields. "If left to their own will, they would never take a spade in their hands, except when they go to dig for mummies; which they find to be a more profitable employment than agriculture. This is the fault of travellers, who are so pleased the moment they are presented with any piece of antiquity that, without thinking of the injury resulting from the example to their successors, they give a great deal more than the people really expect. Hence it has arisen, that they now set such an enormous price on antiquities, and in particular on papyri." The papyrus, though at this stage illegible, had the advantage over most other antiquities of being easily portable; while in many cases, being of a funerary character, it was also beautifully illuminated; and one shudders to think of the amount of priceless material of all sorts which was carelessly thrown aside and forever lost to science, in the blind search for the one type of object which was readily marketable. When the European explorer himself, like Belzoni, frankly confesses, "the purpose of my researches was to rob the Egyptians of their papyri, of which I found a few hidden in their breasts, under their arms, in the space above the knees, or on the legs, and covered by the numerous folds of cloth that envelope the mummy," and tells us, without the least sign of shame, that at every step he took in the Theban tombs he crushed a mummy in some part or other, what was to be expected from the native practitioners of the art of mummy-robbing but the same sins magnified?

The papyri thus found would, of course, be almost exclusively funerary ones, for, though there have been discoveries of historical and literary papyri in tombs and coffins, these have been comparatively few, and the vast majority of manuscripts buried with the mummies have been copies of the Book of the Dead, and similar works. This fact was, naturally, unknown to the early excavators, and Belzoni, for example, naively speculates on the possibility of the manuscripts being lives of the persons with whom they were buried. His observations on the distribution of papyri among the burials with which he dealt are worthy of notice, as showing some attempt on his part to get at the why and wherefore of things in Egyptian funeral customs. "In the same pit where I found mummies in cases, I found others without; and in these, papyri are most likely to be met with. I remarked that the mummies in the cases have no papyri; at least, I never observed any: on the contrary, in those without cases they are often obtained. It appears to me that such people as could afford it would have a case to be buried in, on which the history of their lives was painted: and those who could not afford to have a case, were contented to have their lives written on papyri, rolled up, and placed above their knees." With regard to the distribution of the papyri, Belzoni is probably so far right, for the custom of writing some of the chapters of the Book of the Dead on the outer and inner sides of the coffin, though most prevalent during the Middle Kingdom—(the Coffin Texts)—continued more or less until

the end of the native dynasties of Egypt ; so that it is not unlikely that a number of the coffins which he found were thus inscribed, and would have no papyri in them, while the coffinless interments would have copies, probably very fragmentary ones, of the necessary chapters. Belzoni also remarks that " few or no papyri are to be found among the lower orders, and if any occur they are only small pieces stuck upon the breast with a little gum or asphaltum, being probably all that the poor individual could afford to himself." The chances are that in a number of cases of more elaborate interment Belzoni missed the papyri which he was seeking, from the fact that in later days the inscribed papyrus was sometimes placed, not in the coffin, but in a separate box, which had sometimes a niche cut in the wall of the tomb to receive it. It is in such a position that the most perfect of the extant funerary papyri have been found ; for the papyri which have been placed in the coffins have often been found broken by the motion as the coffin was carried along in the funeral procession, or stained by the bitumen and cedar oil used in the processes of embalmment.

Later still, during the time of the XXIst Dynasty, wooden figures of Osiris, standing on a pedestal, were used as cases for the papyri. A hole was cut in the pedestal and in the figure, and the papyrus, tightly rolled up and tied, was thrust up into the body of the statuette. In a still later development, the Osiris figure was left solid, and cavities were left in the back of it, or in the side of the pedestal, in which the papyri

were placed. The Osiris figure gradually changes to that of the triune god of the resurrection of the later periods, Ptah-Seker-Osiris.

By the year 1822, Champollion had made the great discovery which was to render legible all these manuscripts, and many others of historical and literary importance, which up till that time had ranked as no more than curios. During the dark ages, as we may call them, before the decipherment of Egyptian writing, M. Sallier, of Aix in Provence, had gathered a number of papyri, the most important of which are said to have been purchased by him from an Egyptian sailor. By 1828, Champollion had the opportunity of applying to this storehouse the key of his new discovery, and was at once able to inform the world that in one of the Sallier Papyri there was an account of a war carried on by Ramses II against an enemy whom Champollion called the *Scheto*, and whom he believed to be the Scythians, but whom we have now learned to know as the Hittites. This papyrus, in fact, was the well-known account of the feats of Ramses at the Battle of Kadesh—the so-called Poem of Pentaur. Even more important, though at first, owing to its fragmentary condition, its importance was not so fully appreciated, was another papyrus of the same collection, the First Sallier Papyrus, which contains the story of how one of the last of the Hyksos kings, Apepy, endeavoured to find a *casus belli* with the Theban prince Seqenen-Ra, an attempt which led up to the War of Independence, and the expulsion of the Hyksos. The discovery of the historical value of these Sallier



VI. WEST BANK OF THE NILE AT THEBES.
(Memnon Colossi in foreground. Libyan hills, honeycombed with Tombs, behind.)

Arthur Y. Steel, Esq.



Papyri, and those of the collection made by Signor Anastasi, Swedish Consul in Egypt, containing among other writings the famous *Travels of a Mohar*, led to their acquisition by the British Museum, and their subsequent publication in facsimile in the *Select Papyri*.

Thus the gathering of these fragile records of the past began to pass out of the stage in which it was left simply to the cupidity of native tomb-robbers, and the curiosity of tourists, and to take on a more or less scientific character. Nevertheless, the acquisition of really ancient Egyptian papyri has never assumed the proportions of a special department of research, as has been the case with regard to the later papyri of the Græco-Roman period ; and that for a very obvious reason. The great stores of later papyri have come from places where nothing, or next to nothing, of the nature of other antiquities was to be looked for ; in most instances they have come from the rubbish-heaps of towns, where the contents of the local waste-paper baskets had been emptied. Knowing that this was likely to be the case, the modern papyrus-hunters have concentrated, as we shall see later, practically entirely on this work of ransacking the rubbish-heaps, leaving aside, as out of their province, the search for other objects. On the other hand, the ancient papyri are found, generally speaking, under entirely different conditions, almost always, in the case of funerary papyri, in interments, where they are in company with other articles of interest and archæological value, and in other cases, also along with material

of importance. The excavator may find papyri in the course of his work, and in such cases they are welcomed ; but he is not looking expressly, as his colleague of the Græco-Roman work is, for papyri and nothing else.

Consequently we have the curious, and yet natural, fact that, while practically all the famous later papyri have been gained as the result of work specially directed to their finding, the most famous of the ancient Egyptian papyri have drifted into the possession of the great museums and libraries almost in haphazard fashion, sometimes, as in the case of the Anastasi Collection, by purchase from one whose official position in Egypt had given him the opportunity to gather the precious manuscripts from native dealers, or, as in the case of the Harris Collection, by purchase from the surviving representative of the owner. Of such collections there are comparatively few items which have any account attached to them of where and how they were originally found ; and of those whose provenance has been told, there are perhaps fewer still concerning which we can be sure that the story told is the true one. The Sallier Papyri may have come, as the story goes, from a wandering seaman ; but where this Ancient Mariner got them, or from what sources they originally came, we shall never know. The papyrus containing one of the most famous of Egyptian stories, *The Tale of the Two Brothers*, was not bought in Egypt at all, but in Italy, by Madame d'Orbiney, who, in spite of her name, was an Englishwoman, and it was sold by

her, five years later, to the Trustees of the British Museum. In 1864, there came to light at Der el-Medinet, and in the tomb of a Coptic monk, of all places in the world, the group of manuscripts of which the story of Setna and the Magic Roll forms one. The combination in this case is piquant—a monk and one of the most ancient pieces of fiction in the world! Was the old recluse able to read the novel which he evidently prized enough to take it with him to the grave? Possibly, since Coptic is the descendant of ancient Egyptian, and the Demotic script in which the story of Setna is written comes nearer to Coptic than the more elaborate forms. If he could read it, and was not merely a collector of curios, how did he reconcile the indulgence in such frivolities with the unworldly life to which he was vowed? Again we are left in the dark, and can only be thankful for at least one manuscript to which we can fit a local habitation and a story. “One does not clearly see,” says Maspero, “what would justify the presence of a pagan romance beside the corpse of a monk. We may conjecture that the owner of the papyrus must have been one of the last Egyptians who understood anything of the ancient writings; once he was dead, his pious brethren buried in his grave a set of magic books of which they understood nothing, and beneath which they suspected who knows what snares of the Evil One.”

Among the great funerary papyri, one of the most famous, that of Ani, now in the British Museum, was purchased so late as 1888 by Sir E. A. W. Budge for the Trustees; but when it

was found, or how, has not been stated ; and the same is true of a number of other important manuscripts of the same class. The tomb of Yuaa and Thuau yielded a fairly good papyrus of between 60 and 70 feet in length, containing forty chapters of the Book of the Dead, with coloured vignettes ; but comparatively few of the great finds of our time have yielded important papyri, however rich they may have been in other respects. It may be that, when the work at the tomb of Tutankhamen is completed, and the contents of the sarcophagus and the various coffers of the inner tomb are known, we shall be furnished with complete specimens of the equipment of a Pharaoh of the Empire as regards funerary literature. Meanwhile, we must wait, and add to our distinctions between the ancient and the less ancient among Egyptian papyri the fact that, while the later manuscripts have almost all been the result of searches specially planned for the purpose, the great documents of the more ancient time have nearly all reached their present resting-places by devious ways, and often through very questionable hands.

CHAPTER V

ANCIENT PAPYRI: HISTORICAL AND LEGAL GROUP

WE have seen the manner in which some of the best-known of the ancient papyri came into the hands of their present owners, and were published. It remains now to examine the most important of them, and see what they have to tell us. For this purpose, it will be best to group the papyri to be dealt with according to their subject-matter.

Our first group may very naturally be that of the papyri which deal with historical materials, either giving us accounts of historical incidents, concerning which they are our only sources of information, or supplementing the information already in our possession from other sources, such as inscriptions carved on stelai or temple walls, or in some cases supplying us with new light upon the inner history of reigns or periods of which the external facts were familiar. In some cases it is a little difficult to decide whether a papyrus should fall into this historical group, or into the group of Fiction, or even that of Poetry; for there are papyri which convey what may be, and not improbably is, a genuine element

of history, veiled, on the one hand under romantic, and on the other, under poetical forms.

One of the most notable examples of this interweaving of history and romance is found in the sadly mutilated First Sallier Papyrus, in the shape of a story of an embassy sent by the Hyksos King Apepy to Seqenen-Ra, the Theban prince who led the Egyptians in their great struggle which ended in the expulsion of the Hyksos ; an embassy whose object, as the story is told, was manifestly that of picking a quarrel with the Theban, and giving an excuse for making war upon him.

Now it came to pass (begins the papyrus) that the land of Egypt was in the possession of the polluted, and at that time there was no lord and king (of the whole land). At that time King Seqenen-Ra was prince of the Southern City (Thebes), and King Apepy was in Avaris, and commanded the whole land, with all good things of the land of Egypt. Behold King Apepy made Sutekh his lord, and he served no other god of the whole land but Sutekh ; and for him he built the temple in beautiful work of eternity. . . . And the King Apepy sought words to send a message to the king Seqenen-Ra, the prince of the Southern City.

Then follows a somewhat obscure and mutilated account of King Apepy's council, and we arrive at the ingenious device which the Hyksos magnates hit upon to drive the Thebans to despair.

Now many days after this, king Apepy sent to the prince of the Southern City the report which his scribes and wise men had spoken to him. Now when the messenger whom king Apepy had sent reached the Southern City, he was

Handwritten text in an ancient script, likely Coptic or Greek, arranged in approximately 12 horizontal lines. The script is dense and characteristic of early Christian manuscripts. The text is written in dark ink on a light-colored, aged papyrus surface. The lines are roughly parallel and fill most of the page's width.

taken to the prince of the City. Then said one to the messenger of king Apepy, "What brings thee to the Southern City, and wherefore hast thou travelled hither?" The messenger said to him, "King Apepy sends to thee, saying, 'My messenger has come to thee, concerning the splashing of the hippopotami, which are in the pool in the city (Thebes). For they allow me no sleep, day and night the sound of them is in my ear.'"

"Then the prince of the Southern City was troubled, so that he knew not how to answer the messenger of king Apepy"—at which one can scarcely wonder, for the silencing of hippopotami whose splashing could be heard for a matter of five hundred miles was presumably a matter beyond the powers even of a prince of Thebes. Apparently, so far as can be judged from the broken papyrus, methods of conciliation were tried, but to no purpose. "The messenger of king Apepy betook himself to the place where his master was." His departure, unsatisfied, of course meant war, and we next see poor Seqenen-Ra, like the King of Israel in similar circumstances, saying to his councillors: "Wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me."

Then the prince of the south called to him his great chiefs, his captains, and his wise generals, and told to them all the words which king Apepy had sent to him. And, behold, they were silent with one accord in great grief, neither knew they how to reply either good or evil. Then the king Apepy sent to . . .

And just at this point the aggravating fragment breaks off, and we shall never, perhaps, know what it was that King Apepy sent to King

Seqenen-Ra and his bewildered council, sitting dumb there in Thebes.

Quite manifestly we have in this quaint bit of old narrative something which you cannot exactly call history; for even the Dauphin's tennis-balls, which so rouse the wrath of Shakespeare's *Henry V*, are a reasonable *casus belli* compared with Apepy's complaint about the noise of the Theban hippopotami. What we are dealing with in the Sallier Papyrus, is, as Breasted says, "folk-history, a wave-mark among the people, left by the tide which the Hyksos war set in motion." But to say that is by no means to deny historical value to the papyrus. A kernel of historical fact there is to the story, however preposterous the wrapping of it may be. Apepy is a genuine Hyksos monarch, and Seqenen-Ra, if he be that third of the name whose mummy, with its three ghastly wounds on head and face, is one of the grimmest sights that even Egyptian tombs have yielded, was real enough and man enough to take up the challenge which so perturbed him and his councillors, and to fight the battle of independence to the death. Even the monstrous fable of the hippopotami has behind it the plain fact that the Hyksos usurper must have felt that Thebes was growing too independent, and was not too scrupulous in his choice of an insult which would make war inevitable. We know so little of the actual history of the Hyksos and their expulsion that the old folk-tale really is a serious contribution to our knowledge, inasmuch as it tells us at least that the great war began, not willingly on the side



VIII. STATUE OF THOTHMES III.
(Grey Granite. Cairo Museum.)



of the native Egyptians, but only under intolerable provocation from an enemy who meant war in any case. And one would willingly scrap a good deal of so-called serious history to keep that one glimpse of the Theban prince and his wise and mighty men, sitting "silent with one accord in great grief," at the thought of having to plunge into the war which, all unknown to them, was to bring such glory to their land. It may not be literally true, in the mere details of how it came about, but it is surely an essential bit of the truth about a great historic moment that a literal record would fail to preserve for us, and that we could ill spare.

Even more picturesque in its mingling of romance and history is the narrative which forms part of Papyrus Harris 500, one of the famous collection of papyri made by Mr. A. C. Harris of Alexandria, and purchased after his death from his daughter, Miss Harris, by the Trustees of the British Museum. It goes by the name of "How Tahuti took the Town of Joppa," and the story is followed in the papyrus by a much more ambitious effort of the ancient Egyptian romancer, "The Story of the Doomed Prince." The manuscript of Papyrus Harris 500 is an example of the extraordinary haps and hazards which beset such treasures. The story goes that it was complete at the time of its discovery; but the house in which it was stored at Alexandria was wrecked by an explosion, and the papyrus suffered considerable damage. The beginning of the story of Tahuti has been lost, and, also, most unfortunately, the beginning

and the conclusion of the "Story of the Doomed Prince."

The story of "How Tahuti took the Town of Joppa" dates in its present form, according to Maspero, from the time of the XXth Dynasty; but the events which it recounts belong to a much earlier date, the period when Egypt was at the height of her glory under the rule of the great conqueror Thothmes III. The name of Thothmes continued all through Egyptian history to be a name to conjure with, both literally and metaphorically. By far the majority of inscribed amulets bear the magic name of Menkheperra, and he and his paladins occupy in the Egyptian mind a position somewhat akin to that of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table in British legend. Tahuti, the hero of the narrative of our papyrus, was one of these paladins, an old soldier of the seventeen Syrian campaigns of Thothmes, and evidently a man highly esteemed and valued by his master. Relics of the cunning old captain are scattered through several European museums. One of his funerary vases is at Leyden; his dagger, perhaps the very weapon he wore while he talked with "the Foe in Joppa," is at Darmstadt. Most splendid of all, and most interesting as showing how highly his master prized the veteran, is the magnificent gold dish, measuring seven inches across, and weighing nearly a pound troy, which was presented by the king to his servant, and is now in the Louvre. It is adorned with a design of swimming fish and lotus flowers, and bears this inscription:

Given in praise by the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, *Menkheperra*, to the hereditary chief, the divine father, the beloved by God, filling the heart of the king in all foreign lands and in the isles in the midst of the Great Sea, filling stores with lazuli, electrum, and gold, keeper of all foreign lands, keeper of the troops, praised by the good gold lord of both lands and his *ka*,—the royal scribe Tahuti, deceased.

The introduction to the story in which this old warrior plays the chief part has been destroyed ; but we can restore the outline of it readily enough from what is given us. The Sheikh of the town of Joppa has rebelled against Thothmes, and Tahuti has been sent with troops to put down the rebellion. The wily old soldier has no intention of fighting, if he can gain his ends by guile. He prepares two hundred great earthenware pots, a number of sets of irons, and a great leather sack, large enough to hold a man. He then apparently intimates to the rebel sheikh that he himself is alienated from Thothmes, and ready to join the rebels, and that he has with him the leading-staff of the great Egyptian king, to which seemingly magical powers are attributed. The two chiefs come to a meeting, and Tahuti craftily arranges that the guards of "the Foe in Joppa," as the rebel chieftain is always called, shall be separated from their master, and well supplied with drink. At this point the papyrus comes to our aid.

" Thereafter the Foe in Joppa said to Tahuti :
 ' My heart is set upon seeing the great leading-staff of Menkheperra, which is named . . .

taut-nefer ! By the *ka* of the King Menkheperra, it is in thy hands to-day ; now do as thou hast promised and show it to me.' So Tahuti did as he was bidden. He brought the staff of King Menkheperra (life ! health ! strength !). He seized the Foe in Joppa by his cloak ; he sprang to his feet crying, ' Behold then, O Foe in Joppa, the great staff of the King Menkheperra (life ! health ! strength !), the terrible lion, the son of Sekhmet, to whom Amen his father gives might and puissance ! ' He lifted his hand, he smote the Foe in Joppa on the temple, and the rebel fell senseless before him. He thrust him into the great leather sack which he had prepared and bound his hands with manacles of iron. Then he seized the guards of the Foe, and fettered them. He caused the 200 great jars to be brought, and put 200 of his warriors into them ; into 300 others, he put cords and wooden stocks. He sealed them with his seal, and added nets and poles to bear them with. Then he loaded the whole upon 500 sturdy soldiers, and said to them, ' When you enter the town, you will open the pots and let your companions loose ; you will seize all the people of the town, and put them at once in the wooden stocks.' Then he went out and spake to the charioteer of the Foe in Joppa : ' Thy master is fallen ! Now, therefore, go, call to his wife, and say, ' Rejoice, for Sutekh has delivered into our hands Tahuti, with his wife and his children.' And see, now, I have disguised, as spoil, these 200 jars, which are full of men, and these which are full of stocks and fetters.'

The Charioteer set out at the head of Tahuti's soldiers, to gladden the heart of his sovereign lady, saying: 'We are masters of Tahuti!' The bars of the gate were opened to admit the porters; they entered the town, they opened the jars, and released their comrades; they took possession of the town, and they put in fetters all the inhabitants, small and great. When the army of Pharaoh (life! health! strength!), had taken possession of the town, Tahuti took his ease, and sent a message to Egypt, to the King Menkheperra (life! health! strength!), his master, to say, 'Rejoice! Amen, thy father, hath given thee the Foe in Joppa, with all his subjects, and also his town. Let troops come to take them into captivity, that thou mayest fill the house of thy father Amen, king of gods, with slaves and servants who may be under thy two feet for ever and ever.' This record is finished happily by the work of the scribe learned in the records, the scribe . . .," but unfortunately the name of the learned scribe has disappeared, and we shall never know who was our benefactor.

A benefactor, all the same, he undoubtedly was. One can scarcely believe that the campaigns of Thothmes, picturesque as some of them are, even in the brief record of them at Karnak, were quite so picturesque as this delightful tale, the manifest original of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves, would make out. But again the story is more important, true or false, than much true history, because it conveys to us the impression of ceaseless watchfulness and uncanny wiliness which the great soldier-king and his paladins

made on the Oriental mind of the time. These are the things which give us, not exactly history, but the something without which the stark facts of history are misleading—the true perspective in which to see the facts. These events did not happen in a vacuum, and to try to view them in a vacuum is to misapprehend them ; records like that of Papyrus Harris 500 supply the atmosphere, and what Mr. Berenson would call the *tactile values* of history.

Actual and literal history, however, has its place among the records of the papyri, as well as the historical romance which we have been considering. One of the most famous, as it is also one of the largest, of papyri is the huge document known officially as Papyrus Harris No. 1, but more generally known as the Great Harris Papyrus. Indeed it well deserves the adjective, alike for its size, for the fineness of its writing, and for its splendid state of preservation. It was originally found, along with several other papyri, in a tomb behind the great temple of Ramses III at Medinet Habu, and one can imagine the satisfaction with which Mr. Harris added this magnificent specimen of Egyptian hieratic writing to his collection. The document measures 133 feet in length by $16\frac{3}{4}$ inches in breadth, and is written in a beautifully clear hieratic script. It is dated in the XXXIInd year of Ramses III, Epiphi 6 (April 14). At this date, Ramses IV had already ascended the throne, and indeed the concluding section of the papyrus refers to the death of Ramses III, and adjures the subjects of the empire to be loyal

to the new king. The whole document seems to be a funerary recital of all the good deeds of the dead king towards the gods, a statement to be put in on his behalf before the judgment-seat of Osiris. The amount of the royal benefactions is so huge as to make it evident that we are not dealing merely with the actual gifts made by Ramses III during his reign, but rather with his confirmation to the various priestly colleges of grants, the most of which must have been given by his predecessors. Even so, the total is staggering, and the preponderance in it of the share of Amen sufficiently indicates how it was that by the end of this dynasty the priesthood of Amen was strong enough to thrust aside the royal line, and to usurp the throne.

The summation of the gifts given in the papyrus shows results something like these: Divine Images, 2756; slaves, 113,433; cattle, 490,386; land, about 1300 square miles, or roughly, one-sixth of the whole land of Egypt; towns of Egypt, 160; towns of Syria, 169; gold, £80,000; silver, lead, etc. When we turn to the percentages of this amazing amount of property held by the gods, as revealed by this most interesting document, we find that the Theban god Amen owned five times as much land as Ra of Heliopolis, who was his nearest rival, and nine times as much as Ptah of Memphis. In slaves, Amen held seven times the number owned by Ra; and in all other things the proportions were much the same. Amen owned almost as many cattle as all the other gods put together; out of 513 temple groves, he owned 433; out of

the fleet of 88 ships which belonged to the temples, he owned 83; of the 53 temple workshops, 46 were his. In silver Amen held seventeen times as much, in copper twenty-one times; in wine, nine times as much as all the other temples combined. Nothing could be more illuminative as to the causes of the decay of royal power and the growth of priestly influence than this remarkable list of the good deeds of Ramses III. Of course, he should not be saddled with the whole blame, which he may share with his predecessors from Thothmes III downwards; but both he and they were obviously "*sair sancts to the Crown,*" and to the kingdom.

From some points of view, the almost endless lists of benefactions to the temples, little as they may seem to have to do with history, are therefore more valuable historical matter than any narrative of events could be, because they let us see the hidden causes which led up to and determined great historical events to come. But the papyrus does not fail us even with regard to narrative. After the list has dragged its unwieldy length to a close, there comes a section in which a summary of the great events of the reign of Ramses is given; and this is one of our most valuable sources for the history of a very important period. This section is too long to be given in detail, but portions of it are worth quoting. It begins as follows:

King User-maat-ra-mer-Amen, (Ramses III) life! health! strength! the Great God, said unto the princes, and the chiefs of the land, and the soldiers, and the

Handwritten text in Hieratic script, consisting of approximately 15 lines of cursive characters.

IX. A PAGE OF THE GREAT HARRIS PAPYRUS.
(Hieratic Script.)

charioteers, and the Sherden soldiers, and the multitudes of the bowmen, and to all who dwelt in the land of Egypt, Hearken ye, and I will make you to know the glorious deeds which I wrought when I was king of men. The land of Kemt (Egypt) was open to the stranger, every man was cast out from his rightful estate, there was no chief mouth (ruler) for many years in olden days, until the new time came. The land of Egypt was split up among chiefs and governors of towns, and each one slew his neighbour. . . . Then came another period, with years of want. A certain Syrian, named Arsu, was with them as ruler, and made the whole land subject to him. He gathered his subjects, and made heavy exactions from them. They treated the gods as they treated men, and no sacred offerings were made in the temples. Now when the gods inclined themselves to peace, to set the land in its right according to the ancient manner, they established their son, who came forth from their limbs to be ruler of every land upon their great throne, even Userkhara-setep-en-Amen-mer-Amen (life ! health ! strength !), the Son of Ra, Setnakht (life ! health ! strength !). He was like Khepera-Set when he is angry. He quieted the whole country which had been in rebellion ; he slew the evil-hearted ones which were in Egypt ; he purified the great throne of Egypt ; he was the Governor (life ! health ! strength !) of the Two Lands, on the throne of Amen. Every man knew his brother, who had been walled in. He established the divine offerings in the temples to the Nine Gods, as was right, according to use and wont. He made me by edict Hereditary Chief in the seat of Keb. I became Great High Mouth of the lands of Egypt. I guided the affairs of the whole land, which had been united. He (Setnakht) set on his double horizon (died), like the Nine Gods. That was done for him which was done for Osiris, he sailed in his royal barge on the river, and he rested in his House of Eternity in Western Thebes.

This proem to the deeds of Ramses III, interesting in itself, has attracted more attention of late years because of the suggestion of Professor Eerdmans that the Arsu the Syrian, who, according to the papyrus, usurped the throne of Egypt during the troubled period at the end of the XIXth Dynasty is no other than our old friend Joseph, and that consequently the "king who knew not Joseph" is Setnakht, and that the Exodus took place, not in the reign of Merenptah of the XIXth Dynasty, still less in that of Amenhotep II of the XVIIIth, but in that of one of the Ramesside Pharaohs of the XXth. This view, however, which of course is absolutely at variance with the Biblical chronology, and is from other points of view extremely improbable, has found little favour, and we need not spend more time upon it.

The great papyrus contains a considerable amount of material for the reign of Ramses whose interpretation is less doubtful than that which Eerdmans has put upon the passage about Arsu. The reign was distinguished by two great struggles, in which Ramses, the last great soldier Pharaoh of Egypt, succeeded in rolling back the enemies of the land from its frontiers. The one was the invasion from the west, in which the old enemies of Egypt, the Libyans, rallying again after their crushing defeat in the reign of Merenptah, and leagued with some of the wandering tribes of the Sea-Peoples, who since the fall of the Minoan Empire of Knossos had been scouring the seas, broken masterless men, looking for new homes, made a determined

attempt to force an entrance into the western Delta ; the other was the still more formidable advance of the main body of the Sea-Peoples, who came down from the north into Palestine, and pressed southwards, both by land and sea, with the manifest intention not only of raiding the land of Egypt, but of settling in it permanently. Ramses met both these dangers, which, no doubt, were really parts of the same great movement of the nations, with the skill and determination of a great soldier. The Libyans and their allies, Meshwesh, Thekel, Peleset, Denyen, Sherden and others, among whom we may dimly recognise Sikels, Philistines, Danaoi, and Sardinians, were met and defeated with terrible slaughter at a town, presumably in the western Delta, which was named in consequence, " User-maat-ra-mer-Amen (Ramses III) is the Chastiser of Libya." The yet more alarming horde from the north was beaten back in a double battle, both by land and sea, probably on the coast of Palestine. The papyrus tells us of these triumphs as follows :

I enlarged all the borders of Egypt ; I vanquished those who invaded them. I slaughtered the Denyen in their islands ; Thekel and Peleset were made sacrifice of. The Sherden and the Weshesh of the sea were made as though they were not ; they were seized by me straight-way, and brought as captives to Egypt like the sands of the shore. I shut them up in fortresses, and they were fettered by my name. Their companies were like hundreds of thousands in number. I obliged every one of them to pay yearly taxes of garments and corn into the stores and granaries. . . . Lo, I make you also to know

of the other events which happened in Egypt under my rule. The Libyans and the Meshwesh were making their settlement in Egypt, for they had captured the towns on the west bank of the Nile from Memphis to Karbana, and besides they had occupied both banks of the great river, and had possessed the towns of Kutut for many years, lording it over Egypt. Lo, I crushed and slew them in a single battle. . . . I slaughtered them in their blood, making them as heaps of corpses. I drove them away from trampling over the borders of Egypt. The survivors I carried away, a great multitude of prisoners, trussed like geese in front of my horses, their women and children by the ten thousand, and their flocks and herds by the hundred thousand. I allotted to their chief captains fortresses, where they should live under my name. I made them officers of the bowmen, and captains of the tribes; they were branded with my name, and became my slaves, together with their wives and children. Their flocks and their herds I brought into the House of Amen, and they became his cattle for ever.

Peace had its victories in the days of Ramses III, as well as war, and the papyrus goes on to tell us of these. Chief among them was the expedition to the Land of Punt, which the king ordered, to maintain the traditions of earlier monarchs, like Queen Hatshepsut.

I built great sea-going ships and barges, and manned them with numerous crews and numbers of serving-men. With these were the officers of the marine bowmen, and there were skilled captains and mates to look after them. They were laden with the products of Egypt beyond reckoning, and they sailed away on the Great Sea of the waters of Kat (the Red Sea). They arrived safe and sound at the Land of Punt, no ill-luck following them. Both the great ships and the barges were laden

with the products of the Divine Land (Punt), and with all kinds of wonderful and unknown things which are in that land, and with great quantities of the myrrh of Punt, loaded upon them in tens of thousands without number. The sons of the prince of the Divine Land went before their offerings, their faces turned towards Egypt. They arrived safe and sound at the mountain of Koptos, they moored their ships in peace with the things which they brought as offerings. They were loaded on asses and on men, and then re-loaded on river-boats at the quay of Koptos. They sailed down the river, and arrived in a happy time, and the chiefest of the offerings were carried into the presence of My Majesty. The children of their chiefs worshipped my face, smelling the ground, and bowing to the earth before me. . . .

This narrative of successful traffic with the land which the Egyptians always revered as the land of their own origin, reveals one point of declension from the glories of earlier days. In the time of Queen Hatshepsut, the expedition which the great queen sent to Punt had apparently no need to tranship cargo for the portage across the desert from Koptos to the Red Sea port and again from the Red Sea port to Koptos. A canal seemingly existed which enabled ships to pass from the Nile through the Wady Tumilat, and into the Red Sea ; but by the time of the XXth Dynasty, this had been silted up, and cargoes had to be loaded on asses and porters and carried across the desert to Koptos, higher up the Nile.

One of the surest tests of the strength and prosperity of the reign of an Egyptian Pharaoh, was the hold which was kept of the Sinai Peninsula, with its precious treasures of copper,

malachite, and turquoise ; and the Harris Papyrus shows us Ramses exploiting the old mining country with the same vigour which marked his other enterprises, though perhaps with a certain economy of the truth as regards the work of his predecessors in the same field.

I sent my messengers to the land of Atika to the great copper workings which are there. Their sea-going boats were laden with them, and the rest rode on asses. Such a thing was never heard of before, from the time when kings began to reign. (This, of course, was common form, but was very far from being true.) The copper workings were found, and the ore was loaded by thousands into the sea-going boats. They were sent off with their faces towards Egypt, and they arrived safely. The cargo was lifted out and piled up under the palace balcony in ingots of copper, huge numbers of them, as it were tens of thousands. They were in colour like gold three times tried in the fire. I allowed all the people to see them as marvels. . . .

I sent inspectors and mine-captains to the land of Mafka (Turquoise-land, Sinai) of my mother, Hathor, the Lady of Turquoise. They carried to her silver, gold, fine linen, and many things as numerous as the sand, and offered them before her. Then there were brought unto me marvellous fine turquoises, real stones, in numbers of bags, and they were laid out before me. Never was the like seen before since kings began to reign.

If the papyrus is to be relied upon, the reign of Ramses was the true Golden Age of Egypt. Success in war, and enterprise in foreign trade, were accompanied by peace and happiness at home.

I made the whole land to be planted with groves of trees,

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and with flowering shrubs ; I made the people to sit down under their shade (" every man under his own vine and fig-tree "). I made the woman of Egypt to go with uncovered ears (unveiled) to the place she wished, for no stranger or wayfarer molested her. I made the infantry and the chariotry to live at home in my time ; the Sherden and the Kehek (mercenaries) lay on their backs in their towns ; they had no fear, for there was no enemy from Kush, nor foe from Syria. Their bows and their weapons lay idle in their magazines, while they ate their fill and drank to their hearts' delight. Their wives were with them, their children by their side ; they did not need to look about them, but their hearts were bold, for I was with them, the strength and protection of their bodies. I fed the whole land, foreigners, common people, citizens, male or female. I took a man out of trouble, and I gave him breath. I rescued him from the strong man who was of more account than he. I made all men have their rightful positions in their towns ; and some I made to live, taking them out of the gates of death. I settled the land again where it had been laid waste. The land was well-satisfied in my reign.

The pity was that this idyllic state of affairs, if it ever existed, could not have endured for ever. But Ramses was mortal, like the other " good gods " who had gone before him on the throne ; and the papyrus closes with the dignified admission of the fact, and with counsels to loyalty on the part of his subjects towards his successor, and the prophecy of a long and happy reign for the new king.

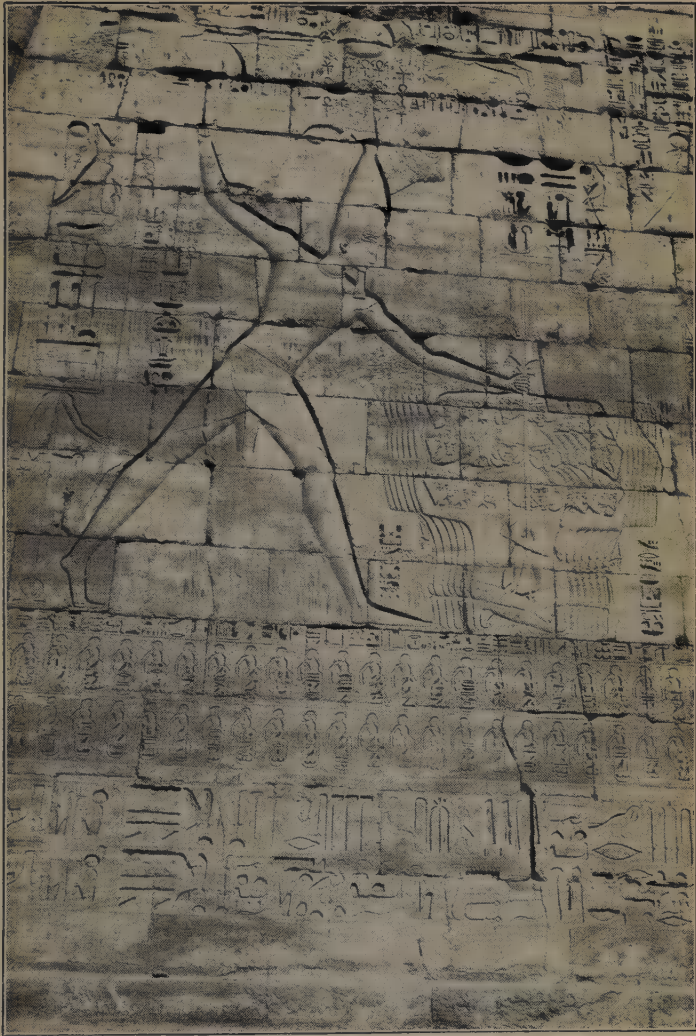
Lo, I go down to Akert (the Underworld) like my father Ra. I join the Great Company of the gods in Heaven, Earth, and the Underworld. Amen-Ra hath established my son upon the throne, he hath received my rank in

peace, as Governor of the Two Lands, and he sits upon the throne of Horus, as Lord of the Two Nile-banks.

Then follows the royal titulary of the new king, Ramses IV, and his father commends the young king to the loyalty and faithful service of his own ministers and courtiers.

He is a true son, favoured for his father's sake. Tie yourselves to his sandals. Smell the ground before him. Do homage to him. Follow him always. Praise him and worship him. . . . Work all as one for him in every undertaking. Haul monuments for him, dig canals for him, work for him with all the power of your hands, and there shall be added unto you his favour, as well as his food daily. Amen hath decreed for him his reign upon earth; he hath made the period of his life twice as long as that of any other king, the King of the South and North, the Lord of the Two Lands, Usermaatra-setep-en-Amen (life! health! strength!) the Son of Ra, the Lord of Crowns, Ramses-heqmaat-mer-Amen (Ramses IV) (life! health! strength!) who is endowed with life forever.

The dream of Ramses III for his son, or perhaps we should rather say the dream of Ramses IV for himself, was one of those which come through the ivory gate. "Amen," said the fond father, or the hopeful son, "hath made the period of his life twice as long as that of any other king"; but the reality was very different. The young Ramses did not reign for even half the span of his father's thirty-one years; and his short span of six years inaugurated a series of brief and inglorious reigns in which the Ramesside dynasty dribbled to a lame and impotent conclusion—to be succeeded by a yet more helpless



X. RAMSES III. SLAYING HIS CAPTIVES.

stock in the persons of the priest-kings of the XXIst Dynasty. Unfortunately for our confidence in the idyllic picture of life in Egypt under Ramses III, we are presented with a very different picture, and one that carries with it much greater authority than the eulogy of a son upon his dead father, in the shape of the records preserved for us in the Turin Judicial Papyrus, and in the Rollin and Lee Papyri, which lay before us one of the most remarkable examples extant of the corruption and palace intrigue which has in all ages been one of the curses of Oriental monarchy.

As Ramses began to draw towards the close of his strenuous reign, and indeed just a year after he had celebrated the magnificent feasts which marked the attainment of the thirtieth year of his reign, trouble began to show itself in the harem, where it usually begins in an Eastern Court. Ramses had already given indications of his will as to the succession to the throne, and these did not meet with the approval of one of the great ladies of the harem. Apparently the designated heir was the son of "the royal wife, the great lady, the lady of the Two Lands, Ast"; but this royal lady was, as usual, cordially hated by one of the secondary wives of the king, the lady Tiy. She had a son, Pentuere (this was not his real name, but the one given to him in the papyrus), and of course she thought that he was more worthy of the throne than his favoured rival. Accordingly she began to make mischief within the harem, and among the great officials of the palace. Her first move was to secure the

co-operation of two men who had the power to facilitate the working of a palace plot—the “Chief of the Chamber, Paibekkamen, and the royal butler, Mesedsure.” The next step was to secure that free communication should be established between the conspirators within the palace and those who were to be enlisted without, and this was done by the infallible Egyptian way of magic. The royal “superintendent of the cows,” a much greater gentleman than his nominal function would suggest, and a man with a great reputation for learning—that is to say for witchcraft—was gained over to the plot. He asked for a magic book from the king’s own library, and it was supplied to him, doubtless by the faithless Paibekkamen. Armed with this store of spells, he resorted to the familiar armoury of wizards in all ages, and fabricated a number of amulets, and waxen figures of gods and men, which were conveyed into the palace, again through the instrumentality of the traitorous chief of the chamber. The amulets were designed to make the ladies of the harem irresistible to the various officials whom they wished to win over to the plot; the wax figures, no doubt, had a still more directly sinister purpose, and were to be used, according to the immemorial practice of wizardry, to secure the death of the king. Whether with or without the help of the amulets, the harem ladies succeeded in winning over the captains of the palace guard, so that messages freely passed out and in between the two sets of conspirators. Messages were sent out, urging the stirring up of

disaffection among the people: "Excite the people, goad on the enemies to begin hostilities against their lord." One of the most dangerous features of the situation was that one of the discontented ladies of the palace was sister to the general commanding the Egyptian troops in Nubia, and she succeeded in persuading him that when the favourable moment came he should revolt and lead his troops to the support of the conspirators. Things looked ominous for Ramses and his destined heir.

Apparently, however, the Intelligence Department of the Egyptian Government was more efficient than the plotters had imagined, for the plot was crushed in a very thorough-going manner, and the completeness of the bag of conspirators who were swept into the net of royal justice reminds one of the thoroughness with which Napoleon was accustomed to make plots against his person serve his own ends of getting rid of uncomfortable individuals. The plot was never allowed to come to a head, so far as can be judged, but was duly watched till things were ripe enough for action; then all the parties to it were seized, and delivered over to justice. It is at this point that the papyri already mentioned, and the Amherst Papyrus which gives supplementary details, take up the story, which so far has been reconstructed from the details of the evidence given before the tribunals.

The record of the papyri speaks badly enough, as we shall see, for some aspects of Egyptian social life, and for the code of honour and ethics

of some of the great officials ; on the other hand, it speaks very plainly of a self-control on the part of the Pharaoh, and of a tradition, thoroughly established, of calm, even-handed justice, which is more than one would have looked for, and certainly more than one would have found, in any other Oriental state, or, for the matter of that, in any state of the time. Practically it may be said that in any state of the time, or in any Oriental state down to the day before yesterday, the revelation of such a plot would have been the signal for an outburst of savagery which would have ended in the slaughter of every one, innocent or guilty, on whom the slightest shadow of suspicion fell. Pharaoh's conduct was just about as different from that of the typical Oriental despot as can be imagined. Ramses had every excuse for taking a swift and bloody revenge on the conspirators. The very words in which he indicates the course of action which he meant to follow show, by their solemnity, and by their peculiar phrasing, that he expected his own death to follow, as the result of the shock which the plot had given to one who was now growing aged ; but he expressly disclaims all thought of private and personal vengeance, and directs his judges to deal with the case of the traitors strictly according to justice. The case, of course, was too momentous to be referred merely to one of the ordinary judges. A special commission was appointed, consisting of eleven judges. Six of these were to try the case of the harem officials ; the other five had entrusted to them the more important cases of

the chief criminals. Here is the royal decree appointing the commission.

I commission the judges (their names and official positions follow), saying, "As for the words which the people have spoken, I know them not. Go ye and examine them. When ye go, and when ye examine them, ye shall cause to die by their own hand those who should die, without my knowing it. Ye shall execute punishment upon the others likewise without my knowing it. . . . Give heed and have a care lest ye execute punishment upon anyone unjustly. . . . Now I say unto you in very truth, as for all that has been done, and those that have done it, let all that they have done fall upon their own heads; while I am protected forever while I am among the just kings who are before Amen-Ra, king of gods, and before Osiris, ruler of Eternity."

It would be difficult to devise a more creditable statement of the duties of such a commission. Justice was to be strictly impersonal, and the fact that the crime was one against the king was to be excluded from the matter altogether—at least in its personal aspect. We have only to contrast the instructions given, according to the papyrus, to this ancient Egyptian commission, with the brutal savagery and perversion of justice which went by the name of State Trial in our own country between the Restoration and the Revolution of 1688, to see how far the ancient Egyptian of 1167 B.C. was ahead of the Englishman of 2800 years later in his conception of the administration of justice.

The commission, thus appointed, disposed of the various cases, and the sentences are recorded in the papyrus with monotonous uniformity.

The sentence of Mesedsure may be quoted as typical :

The great criminal Mesedsure, a royal butler. He was brought up on account of his offence which he committed in conjunction with Paibekkamen, and with the women, in stirring up malefactors to do wrong to their Lord. He was presented before the great magistrates of the Seat of Judgment. They investigated his crimes, and found the verdict that he had committed them, and that his crimes had been consummated by him. The magistrates who judged him caused his punishment to be inflicted upon him.

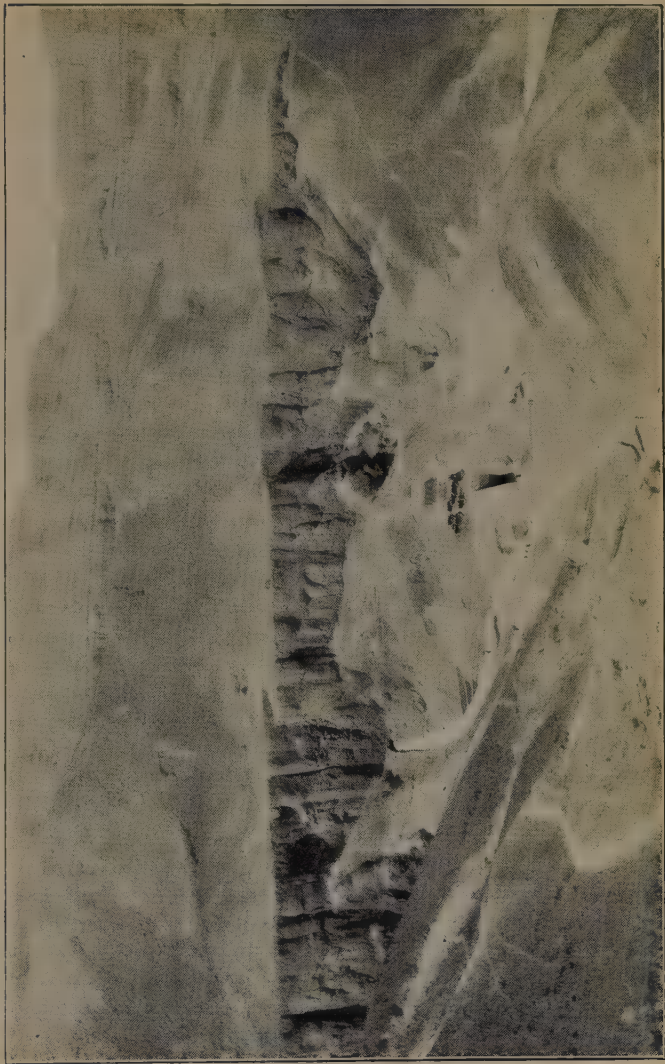
Occasionally there is a slight variation, as in the case of another butler, of whom it is said that "he turned away from the plot, but concealed it, and did not report it." He, too, is sentenced in the usual formula, but we may believe that his punishment was not such a severe one as that of the more guilty criminals. In the case of the criminals whose cases were deemed to be of such importance that they were reserved for the smaller commission of five great officials, the sentence is recorded in different and very grim terms. We may take that of Pentuere, the pivot of the whole plot, though perhaps by no means the most guilty of the conspirators.

Pentuere, who is also known by another name. He was brought before the court, and charged with complicity in the conspiracy which his mother Tiy made with the women of the harem, and with acting in a manner hostile to the king : having been examined by the officers of the court, the judges found him guilty, and they sent him away to his house where *he died of himself*.

In other words, the unfortunate pretender, like those of his fellow-conspirators who received the capital sentence, was allowed, doubtless to avoid a public scandal, to commit suicide.

One of the grimmest of the finds in the *cache* of Pharaohs at Der el-Bahri was the mummy of a young man whom Maspero believes to have been the Prince Pentuere, "who is also known by another name." The body was enclosed in an uninscribed coffin, and had not been prepared in any way before being wrapped in a thick layer of linen. "It makes one's flesh creep to look at it," says Maspero. "The hands and feet are tied by strong bands, and are curled up as if under an intolerable pain; the abdomen is drawn up, the stomach projects like a ball, the chest is contracted, the head is thrown back, the face is contorted in a hideous grimace, the retracted lips expose the teeth, and the mouth is open as if to give utterance to a last despairing cry. The conviction is borne in upon us that the man was invested while still alive with the wrappings of the dead." Others have suggested that the ghastly appearance of the mummy suggests rather that the man died in the agony following the administration of a strong irritant poison; and, if this really is the mummy of the pretender prince, it is perhaps more likely that this is the case, in view of the expression—"he died of himself." At all events, the dead man was of princely rank, or his body would not have been with the royal mummies; and his appearance fits the conditions of this ancient case of high-treason.

A curious feature of the proceedings is the suppression of the true names of the culprits. We have seen the open admission that Pentuere was not the name of the guilty prince, and Erman has pointed out that several of the other names have been perverted in the papyrus. Thus Mesedsure, whose sentence we have quoted, means "The Sun-god hates him"; while another guilty official is named "Be'nem-uese," which means "Bad in Thebes." It is obviously impossible that Egyptian officials of high rank ever bore such ill-omened names as these, and we may suppose that the true names were "Mer-su-Re," "The Sun-god loves him," and "Nefer-em-Uese," "Good in Thebes." The object, no doubt, was again to prevent scandal, and to save, so far as possible, the face of the various noble families whose scions had been implicated in the business. What became of the guilty Queen Tiy, whose jealousy had been the beginning of the whole plot, we do not know, as there is no mention in the papyrus of her having appeared before the judges. Perhaps she was disposed of in a more summary manner, or still more privately. There were traditions of a very ancient date in Egyptian legal practice, relating to the trial of a disloyal queen, for Una, one of the great officials of King Pepy I of the VIth Dynasty, tells us that he was appointed sole judge in the trial of Queen Amtes for some unspecified offence. "His Majesty caused me to enter in order to hear the case alone. No chief judge and vizier at all, no prince at all was there, but only I alone, because I was excellent."



XI. THE VALLEY OF THE TOMBS OF THE KINGS.

(Tomb of Ramses VI in centre. Tomb of Tutankhamen below and to right.)

Arthur Y. Steel, Esq.

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Perhaps this precedent may have been followed in the case of Queen Tiy.

Creditable as is the organisation of the whole trial to the Egyptian sense of order and justice, the record is marred by one incident, faithfully recorded in the papyrus, which shows the corruption which was spreading through the moral fibre of the nation, and which was destined ere long to produce such disastrous results to the national strength and prestige. During the progress of the trial, some of the accused women, with the help of one of the male culprits, the General Peyes, managed to corrupt the guards in charge of the culprits to such an extent that they, in company with the women and Peyes, went to the houses of two of the judges, who, to use the Egyptian phrase of the papyrus, "made a beer-house," that is to say, drank and revelled with the criminals whom they were supposed to be trying. It is hard to say which is the more amazing, the daring, not to say impudence, of the criminals, or the blazing indiscretion of the judges. The latter were at once brought to trial themselves, together with a third judge, who was accused of the same fault. He succeeded in proving his innocence; but the first two were found guilty, and "their punishment was fulfilled by the cutting off of their noses and ears." One of the guilty judges was so affected by the humiliation which he had brought upon himself that he committed suicide.

CHAPTER VI

ANCIENT PAPHRI: HISTORICAL AND LEGAL— (continued)

TRIALS OF THE TOMB-ROBBERS

ONE of the most interesting among the groups of ancient Egyptian papyri is that which is concerned with the robberies which had been taking place among the royal tombs at Thebes during the XXth Dynasty, and which came to light in the time of Ramses IX, owing, in the first place, to a quarrel between the Mayor of Thebes, the city of the living on the east bank of the Nile, and his brother official, the Mayor of the City of the Dead on the west bank. The story has a special interest at the present time, when the whole question of the scientific excavation of the royal tombs has been in dispute, owing to the work on the tomb of Tutankhamen; and it is not without its own intrinsic interest and humour as a revelation of how unchangeable are national characteristics, for the two high officials who are the protagonists in the quarrel, and all the other parties to it, official and lay, bear themselves exactly in the same manner in which their modern representatives would behave in similar circumstances.

The group of papyri which tells the story has suffered the usual fate of such collections. Instead of being gathered together, so that all the material is available at once for comparison, the various papyri which compose the group are scattered in various collections, and have been published piecemeal, so that the complete story has to be pieced together out of the partial narratives which have been produced. One of the main sources, the Abbott Papyrus, was found at Thebes, passed into the hands of Dr. Abbott of Cairo, and was purchased from him in 1857 by the Trustees of the British Museum, who published a facsimile of it, with a preface by Dr. Birch, in 1860. It has since been frequently translated. Another important document was purchased by Lord Amherst, and on the dispersal of his famous collection, went, like so much other valuable material, to America. In 1860 a supplementary document was found at Medinet Habu, and "after suffering sadly from careless treatment and want of proper preservation," words which describe the fate of many such precious records of the past, was at length acquired by the British Museum. It is known as Papyrus Harris A. The Liverpool Museum possesses two comparatively small but important papyri, known as Mayer A, and Mayer B; and there is a fragment in the Turin Museum. The portions of the story dealt with in these various sources are as follows.

The Abbott Papyrus records the inquiry which took place in the sixteenth year of Ramses IX into the alleged violations of royal tombs,

with the findings of the court of inspection. The Amherst deals with the same inquiry, and gives a remarkably vivid confession and description of the robbery of a royal tomb. The Mayer Papyri deal with supplementary evidence on the subject which came to light three or four years later, in the first year of Ramses X, in the course of another trial. Putting all the evidence together, it is possible to construct a fairly complete story of the whole business, which is not without its humorous aspects, and casts a somewhat lurid light on the state of society and morals in Thebes about 1120 B.C.

The star parts in the cast of the play are those of the two mayors, the one of Eastern, the other of Western Thebes. Infinitely their superior in the official hierarchy, but inferior in the interest of the part he has to play in the development of the drama, is the vizier Khaemuast, the direct representative of Pharaoh. Khaemuast apparently only held his exalted position for a short time, for we hear of another vizier shortly before the opening of the play, and this same man, Nebmara-Nakht, supersedes Khaemuast before the last act, so that seemingly Khaemuast's viziership was only a stop-gap one between the two terms of office of Nebmara-Nakht. Next comes the king's butler, Nesuamon, a typical lick-spittle of the kind bred about Oriental courts, who plays a very vital part of a very undignified kind. There is a suitable equipment of grave official persons, who sit on a royal commission of inquiry, and do as the vizier tells them, after the manner of members of royal

commissions in all ages. The rest of the stage is occupied by police officers, necropolis officials, workmen, and thieves, the last three groups being apparently interchangeable—possibly the last four.

The drama opens with the action of the Mayor of Thebes, Paser. One can well imagine the man from his record in the story. A portly municipal dignitary of a type not unknown in other lands and times, much occupied with consideration of his own dignity and importance, irascible to a degree, when his sense of these is shocked, rather stupid and pompous, but in the main, if not tried too high, an honest man, and, unluckily for himself in this instance, a man who tried to make others honest, whether they would or no. Above all, a man who has a pet aversion, in the shape of his colleague, the Mayor of the City of the Dead on the other side of the water. Pewero, the rival mayor, strikes one as a much subtler and more plausible type. One figures him slighter, quieter, suppler, with none of his rival's bluster, but with a deadly cunning and readiness which make him a much more dangerous enemy, probably also, much more of a *persona grata* with really big official personages like the vizier Khaemuast than Paser, whose habit of speaking out what he felt must have been troublesome to Eastern officialdom.

Meanwhile Paser is happy, for the very good reason that he has just heard of a shocking case of violation of one of the royal tombs on the western bank of the Nile. Eight thieves had broken into the tomb of King Sebekemsaf, who reigned about six hundred years before, and

had plundered the royal mummy, and that of the Queen Nubkhas, who was buried beside her husband. How Paser got hold of the information, we do not know, but apparently he had been able to lay hands on the thieves as well, and, by ways familiar to Oriental justice in all ages, to extract a full confession from them. The Amherst Papyrus gives us the confession of the aching thieves, and forms the first production in the *dossier* of the Tomb-Robberies. The beginning of the confession is lost, and when we reach firm ground, the story is in full swing. . . .

King's Wife, Nubkhas (life! health! strength!) his royal wife in the place of his sepulchre, it being protected with mortar covered with blocks. We penetrated them all, we found her resting likewise. We opened their coffins and the coverings in which they were. We found the august mummy of this king. . . . There was a numerous list of amulets and gold ornaments at its throat; its head had a mask of gold upon it; the august mummy of this king was overlaid with gold throughout. Its coverings were wrought with gold and silver, within and without, inlaid with every splendid costly stone. We stripped off the gold which we found on the august mummy of this god, and its amulets and ornaments which were at its throat, and the coverings wherein it rested. We found the King's Wife likewise; we stripped off all that we found on her likewise. We set fire to their coverings. We stole their furniture, which we found with them, being vases of gold, silver, and bronze. We divided, and made the gold which we found on these two gods, on their mummies, and the amulets, and coverings, into eight parts.

Here was a find indeed for an honest official

who was sure that that plausible rascal Pewero, on the other side of the river, had winked at the whole business, and at much more of the same kind. Surely, with a piece of evidence like this, he would be able to put a spoke in the wheel of the mayor of the necropolis, perhaps even to get him dismissed from the post which he disgraced. Accordingly the confession of the eight rascals was dispatched post-haste to the vizier, Khaemuast, with a request that the matter should be looked into, and, no doubt, with hints that probably this would only be found to be one instance of a regular practice to which Pewero had been culpably, if not willingly blind. The vizier acted with strict correctness, but in such a manner as to give Pewero, whom he obviously favours all through, the chance of appearing as an active and diligent official, who is himself eager to inquire into all abuses in his department. Pewero is invited to send in a report, and on receipt of it Khaemuast appoints a commission to look into the whole matter, so wording the minute of appointment as to make it appear that the commission was acting, not on the charges brought by Paser, but on the report of the diligent and efficient Pewero. One can imagine Paser's rage, as he read the minute of the court, and realised how Khaemuast and Pewero, between them, had side-tracked his whole case.

There were sent the inspectors of the great and august necropolis—(so the Abbott Papyrus, which now takes up the story)—the scribe of the vizier and the scribe of the governor of the White House of Pharaoh (life ! health !

strength !) in order to inspect the sepulchres of former kings, the tombs and resting-places of the nobles, west of the city ; by, 1. the Governor of the City and Vizier, Khaemuast ; 2. the King's butler, Nesuamon, the scribe of Pharaoh ; 3. the Major-domo of the house of the Divine Votress (life ! health ! strength !) of Amen-Ra, King of Gods, king's butler, Neferkara-em-per-Amen, the herald of Pharaoh (life ! health ! strength !) because of the thieves on the west of the city, *concerning whom the mayor, the chief of police of the great and august necropolis of Pharaoh on the west of Thebes, Pewero, had reported to the vizier, the nobles and butlers of Pharaoh.*

First blood, so to speak, to Pewero, who appears, not as the accused, but as the honest official courting investigation !

The members of the Commission duly got to work, and promptly reported on ten royal tombs of kings, four of queens, and a number of tombs of noble families. Of the kings' tombs, it was found that the tomb of Amenhotep I, which we are expressly told that Paser had reported as being violated, was uninjured, and also eight other tombs, though attempts had been made upon two of these, but unsuccessfully. The tomb of Sebekemsaf, which had been the foundation of the whole charge, was found to have been totally rifled, as the confession indicated ; but Paser was not allowed to draw any credit from this, for his name is carefully excluded from the minute dealing with this tomb, though it is mentioned in the unestablished charge of the tomb of Amenhotep I.

The burial-place was found void of its lord, as well as the burial-place of the great King's Wife, Nubkhas, his royal

wife ; the thieves having laid hands on them. The vizier, the nobles, and the inspectors made an examination of it, and the manner in which the thieves had laid their hands upon this king and his royal wife was ascertained.

Papyrus Amherst has already made us as wise as the vizier and his colleagues ; the animus against poor Paser is sufficiently manifest. Of the four queens' tombs examined, two were found uninjured, the other two had been broken into ; while the condition of the tombs of the nobles was deplorable.

It was found that the thieves had broken into them all, that they had pulled out their occupants from their coverings, and thrown them upon the ground ; and that they had stolen their articles of house-furniture which had been given them, together with the gold, the silver, and the ornaments which were in their coverings.

So far, honours might fairly be said to be easy between the two combatants. Paser had said a little more than he could prove, and had got duly snubbed, more for giving all this trouble than for the failure of part of his charge ; but the state of affairs actually disclosed in the necropolis can scarcely have satisfied even Khaemuast, and no doubt Pewero heard of it in private, on the deafest side of his head. Paser would have been well advised, seeing the animus of the court, to let well or ill alone, and be thankful that he had come so well out of the business.

Unfortunately for himself, however, and fortunately for us, he was either too stupid to realise the position, or too eager to complete the destruction of his rival, or, perhaps least

likely of all, too honest a man to count the cost to himself. Feeling perhaps that in spite of the snub which the court had administered to himself, he had succeeded in shaking his enemy's position, he now proceeded to lay before the Commission another charge. Two years before, a disreputable coppersmith of the necropolis, named Pekharu—"the Syrian," whose social status may be inferred from the fact that his mother was named Mitshere, which is to say, being interpreted, "Little Cat," had come under suspicion of being concerned in tomb-robbery, having been found, with three other men, in the neighbourhood of the tombs, and had been "examined" by the former vizier Nebmara-Nakht. Paser laid hands on this man, extracted a kind of a confession from him, which introduced new matter into the case, and involved a tomb which had not previously been inspected—that of Queen Isis, wife of Ramses III. This new piece of evidence Paser at once dispatched, doubtless with great glee, to the Commission, and, we may believe, thought that he had now finally settled that plausible rascal Pewero. In point of fact, he had delivered himself into the hands of the spiteful mayor of the necropolis, and his big backer the vizier. A meeting of the Commission was held, and the following confession from the coppersmith was laid before the members: "I was in the tomb of the King's Wife, Isis (Life! Health! Strength!) of King Usermara-Meriamon (Ramses III) (Life! Health! Strength!); I carried off a few things from it; I took possession of them." The

unlucky coppersmith was probably "examined" in the usual fashion, by bastinado on the hands and feet; but he adhered to his confession, having possibly the fear of Paser before his eyes. There was nothing for it, therefore, but to make an inspection. It was apparently customary not to put absolute trust in a confession extracted under the bastinado, as the victim might say anything merely to gain a respite from torture. It was required, therefore, both of the guilty coppersmith and of the eight robbers who had broken into the tomb of Sebekemsaf, that they should be led blindfold into the Valley of the Kings, or wherever else the scene of their evil deeds lay, and should identify the tomb or tombs which they had confessed to have robbed, by laying their hands upon them.

We are to join ourselves, then, to the procession which set out from Thebes in the morning of "the 19th day of the third month of the first season, year 16," "to inspect the seats of the kings' children, the kings' wives, and the kings' mothers, which are in 'The Place of Beauty'"—which we now know as the Valley of the Queens, considerably to the south of the Valley of the Kings, and behind the great temple of Medinet Habu. The reason for going there was to inspect the tomb of Queen Isis, which is No. 51 in the present-day numbering. The procession consists, first, of the great man, Khaemuast, in a very bad temper at having to waste a day on such an errand, next of the king's butler, Nesuamon, quite well content to be seen in the company of so great a man as the vizier,

and rather anxious to see with his own eyes which way the cat is going to jump ; next of the chief of police and a few of his satellites, with Pekharu the coppersmith limping along blindfold in the midst of them ; finally, also under guard, but, as events are to prove, scarcely a very efficient guard, the eight blindfolded and sore-footed gentlemen who have to identify the tomb of King Sebekemsaf, the scene of their nefarious exploits. Landing on the west bank, we may presume, from the course of events, that the vizier directs the police guards, with the eight men, to wait until he returns from the inspection of the tomb of Queen Isis ; and he and Nesuamon set off on their hot journey with the coppersmith and his guards. Arrived near the place, the bandage is taken from Pekharu's eyes, and he is bidden, no doubt with the accompaniment of a few more blows and kicks, to point out the tomb which he had robbed. Blinking and bewildered, he looks round, picks out the first opening that his eyes light on, and says : " There it is." Unluckily for him, he had pitched on a tomb which had never been used. This blunder no doubt earned him another dose of stick, and, still more bewildered, he led his inquisitors to another cave. This time his luck was still worse, for he had chosen the cave where one of the workmen of the necropolis lived, or kept his tools. Thoroughly disgusted, Khaemuast nods to the police, the unfortunate coppersmith is thrown down, and the bastinado is used with the utmost severity to quicken his memory. All in vain, however, for at last the poor creature tells his

torturers that though they were to cut off his nose and ears and put him on the rack he could not tell them of any other tombs than the two caves which he has pointed out. In their disgust, the inspectors evidently only give the most perfunctory of glances to the queens' tombs, and turn back again to the spot where they had left the guard with the eight other prisoners.

Arrived there, they find that this unlucky day is to be unlucky to the end. Somehow or other, the eight have either taken advantage of the carelessness of the guards, or have got round them by prayers or bribes. The birds are flown into the Libyan hills, where you might seek for months without finding them, and the net result of the day's work is that much less than nothing. You can imagine Khaemuast's fury, or at least the show of fury which he makes, for one has a suspicion that the escape of the eight may not have been altogether such a surprise as it seemed. It was not altogether inconvenient that the only witnesses who so far had borne out any of Paser's charges should disappear; and unless the police had got a hint to look the other way, the escape of eight men, blindfolded, and crippled by their recent dose of the bastinado, was not very creditable to them. One way or the other, as a very sulky vizier is making his way down to the ferry, he is approached by a number of the officials and workmen of the necropolis (Pewero hovering discreetly in the background), who invite his permission to send a deputation to him across the river, which means, of course, a demonstration by the way at

the house of that slanderer Paser, who has been making false charges against us. Nothing loth, to work off his ill-temper, Khaemuast gives permission. "Deputise or demonstrate till you are tired, if you wish," and goes home to draw up with Nesuamon the minute of his blank day. Here it is from the Abbott Papyrus.

The vizier and the butler had the coppersmith taken before them to the tomb, while he was blindfolded. . . . He was permitted to see again when he had reached the tombs. The officials said to him, "Go before us to the tomb, from which you said, 'I carried away the things.'" The coppersmith went before the nobles to one of the tombs of the king's children of King Usermara-Setepenra (Ramses II) (Life! Health! Strength!) the Great God, in which no one was buried, which was left open, and to the hut of the workman of the necropolis, Amenemyenet, son of Huy, which was in this place, saying, "Behold the tombs in which I was!" The nobles examined the coppersmith with a severe examination in the great valley, but he was not found to know any place there, except the two places on which he had laid his hand. He took an oath of the King (Life! Health! Strength!) that he should be mutilated by cutting off his nose and ears and placing him on the rack if he lied, saying, "I know not any place here among these tombs, except this tomb which is open, together with the hut upon which I have laid your hands." The officials examined the tombs of the great seats which are in "The Place of Beauty," in which the kings' children, kings' wives, kings' mothers, the goodly fathers and mothers of Pharaoh (Life! Health! Strength!) rest. They were found uninjured. The great officials caused the inspectors, the administrators, the workmen of the necropolis, the chiefs of police, the police, the serf-labourers of the necropolis of the west of the city to go around as a great deputation to the city.

Poor Paser little knew what he had let himself in for; but he was soon enlightened. That afternoon a howling crowd of necropolis workmen, professedly on their way as a deputation to the vizier, filled the street in which the mayoral residence was, and the Mayor of Thebes was jeered at, sworn at, and blackguarded by all the riff-raff of the western bank, and by some who should have known better, after the manner in which Eastern crowds (and some others) treat an unpopular or inconveniently truthful public man. One can imagine Pewero, on the other side of the river, catching the faint sound of the shouts, and smiling to himself—good innocent man! Paser, one imagines, was reduced to a state not far from apoplexy; and in his rage he blindly fell right into the pit which his enemies wanted him to fall into, and to which the “deputation” was meant to shepherd him.

That evening he went along to the temple of Karnak, perhaps to unbosom himself to his friend the High-Priest of Amen. Either on his way, or at the temple, he picked up the King's butler, Nesuamon, whom we have seen otherwise employed earlier in the day, but who wished, worthy man, to be all things to all men. The two were standing by the little temple of the Theban Ptah, on the north side of the Karnak enclosure, when Paser caught sight of three members of that unheard-of deputation, whose insults were still rankling in his bosom—“the chief workman Userkhepesh, the scribe Amenakht, and the workman of the necropolis Amenhotep.” The chances are that before

crossing the river again they had been wetting their victory in good Theban beer, and were a bit above themselves ; and one can imagine the sniggers and chuckles which passed among the three as they met Paser. It was more than human nature could stand, and the wrathful mayor addressed the three in good round Egyptian to such purpose that in a moment they were all talking at once, with Paser's voice highest of all, as he roared out his charges against the whole brood of the necropolis, and its sneaking scoundrel of a mayor. Nesuamon stood by, listening and scarcely believing his ears. Here was luck indeed ! To think of the choice morsels of scandal he would have to report to the vizier to-morrow ; and he might have missed it all if he had not gone out for his evening stroll, or had not been good-natured enough to speak to poor foolish Paser, down on his luck !

“ This deputation,” you can still catch Paser's roar in the Abbott Papyrus, “ this deputation which ye have made this day, it is no deputation at all. It is simply your jubilation which ye have made. Ye crow over me at the door of my house ! Oh indeed ! Although I am the mayor who makes reports direct to Pharaoh (Life ! Health ! Strength !) and so in crowing over me, you are crowing over him. ‘ Ye were there ’ (this in answer to a reply which one of the three had got in), ‘ Ye were there, and ye found it uninjured ! ’ ” You and your reports ! “ Broken into were the tomb of Sebekemsaf, and his royal wife Nubkhas, though the vizier reports the opposite ten times over ! I call down upon you



XII. TEMPLE OF THE THEBAN PTAH, KARNAK,
(Where Paser quarrelled with the Necropolis deputation.)

the judgment of Amen-Ra, King of Gods, in defence of these sacred tombs, standing as I do in his halls." Here, apparently, Paser had to stop to get breath, and Userkhepesh seized the opportunity to quote Khaemuast's earlier report that all the other tombs were undamaged. "Undamaged," roared Paser again, "yes, if your arm was as long as your tongue!"

So far, no bones had been broken, and if Paser had only been able to control his rage and keep his own counsel, his blowing off steam might have done no harm. But now he began to court trouble, much to the delight, no doubt, of Nesuamon, who was listening with all his ears. "Yes," he shouted, "the scribe of the necropolis, Horishere, son of Amennakht, came to the chief side of the city, to my place of abode, and he told me three very serious accusations. My scribe, and the scribe of the two districts of the city, put them in writing. Moreover, the scribe of the necropolis, Pebes, told me two other matters; in all five. They were put in writing likewise. He that hath them cannot keep silence. God forbid, for they are great and capital crimes, worthy of bringing to the block, and of executing every penalty because of them. Now I shall write concerning them to Pharaoh, my Lord (Life! Health! Strength!), that a man of Pharaoh (Life! Health! Strength!) may be sent to take you all in charge." So saying, and swearing ten good round oaths by Pharaoh, "So will I do!" the irate mayor shook his fist in the faces of the deputation, and tramped off home, feeling, I dare say, a little better now that

he had got rid of the perilous stuff that had been lying upon his heart.

Actually he had delivered himself bound hand and foot into the hands of Khaemuast and Pewero. In writing himself directly to Pharaoh, he had probably committed a breach of official etiquette, as the report should have gone through the vizier; certainly he had gravely sinned against the Red-tape and Circumlocution Department of the Egyptian bureaucracy in allowing the two scribes of the necropolis to report to him. They should have reported to the vizier, or, if he was in Lower Egypt, to the chief of the necropolis police, who in turn would report to Khaemuast—a remarkably fine arrangement in which the duty of dealing with crime lay with the men who were probably responsible for most of it. The toady, Nesuamon, saw his opportunity at once. Early next morning he hurried across the river to Pewero, overflowing with importance, and told him all that had happened; and the two worthies sat down with delight to concoct a letter to the vizier, which should blow Paser and his wild (but true) charges sky-high. Listen to the immemorial lick-spittle as he reveals himself after three thousand years in the letter of the virtuous Pewero. The hand is the hand of Pewero; the voice that of Nesuamon. "I heard these words which the mayor of the city spoke to the people of the great and august necropolis of millions of years of Pharaoh (Life! Health! Strength!) on the west of Thebes; and I report them to my lord, for it were a crime for one like me to hear such words

and conceal them." How fine a thing is a sense of duty! Pewero had his letter ready in no time, and the virtuous Nesuamon took it over the river with him to Khaemuast that very day; what else he took with him is not recorded, but it would have been a pity if such useful friendship as his went unrewarded, and no doubt he had something in his hand as a token of the gratitude of Pewero—one wonders if it may not have been some of the gold from the tombs about which all the fuss was being made.

Khaemuast was prompt to seize the advantage which Paser's too long tongue had given him. A special meeting of Commission was called for next morning, and Paser was associated with the other judges, so that his humiliation might be the more conspicuous and public. The court being assembled, "Day 21, in the great court of the city, beside the two stelæ of the forecourt of Amen in the gate called 'Praise,'" the vizier rose and with a few coldly contemptuous words waved aside all Paser's new accusations, as though they amounted to nothing more than the old one of the coppersmith and his accomplices, which had already been investigated.

Said the vizier to the great nobles of the great court of the city: "This mayor of the city" (you imagine a supercilious wave of the hand to where poor Paser sits—in the right, but helpless) "said a few words to the inspectors and workmen of the necropolis, the day before yesterday, in the presence of the king's butler, Nesuamon, delivering himself of slanders concerning the great seats which are in 'The Place of Beauty.' Now I, the vizier of the land, have been there, with the king's butler, Nesuamon, the

scribe of Pharaoh. We inspected the tombs where the mayor of the city said that the coppersmiths had been. We found them uninjured, and all that he said was found to be untrue. Now, behold the coppersmiths stand before you; let them tell all that occurred." They were examined. It was found that they did not know any place in the seat of Pharaoh, of which the mayor had spoken the words. He was found wrong therein.

One's sympathies are all with the mayor of the city as he sits in speechless rage, seeing the vizier trail this manifest red herring over the new scent, but powerless to make a better of the trouble which his own rashness had brought upon him. With the formal reprimand of the court, he disappears from the scene—a decent man, one believes, in the main, who was no match for the slippery villains against whose ghoulish interest he had tilted in an unlucky hour for himself. You figure him going home fairly bursting with rage, and vowing that Pharaoh might look after his own dead ancestors in the future.

But, though the mills of God grind slowly, they do grind; and though Pewero was done with Paser, he was not done with the facts. A year later the eight thieves who had escaped into the hills were taken, and their examination proved that the tomb of Queen Isis had been violated after all, by them, and not by the coppersmith. Vizier Khaemuast, cursing his evil fate, had to make a second journey to "The Place of Beauty," and this time his inspection had to be a little more thorough than the last time. It may have been some comfort to Paser, if he was still

in the land of the living, to hear the result. The Turin Papyrus gives it to us.

Year 17, third month of the second season, day 22. The workmen of the necropolis ceased work, and the butler, governor of the city, and vizier Khaemuast, the workmen of the necropolis and their overseers went up to the place of the female singers, to inspect the tomb of the king's daughter, king's wife, Isis. They opened her tomb, they found the granite sarcophagus, the eight thieves having wrought damage in it. They had wrought evil destruction on all that was therein; and they had damaged its owner.

It is rather a comfort to think of Khaemuast crawling through the tomb, sweating and cursing, to see with his own eyes, and to be forced to admit the truth of the charges which he had contemptuously waved aside a year before.

But fate had not finished with Pewero and his delinquencies. Two years later still, when Khaemuast had apparently gone where bad viziers go, and was perhaps finding out by personal experience the facts that he did not admit in life about the state of the Theban necropolis, the scribe of the court took the dusty Abbott Papyrus out of its pigeon-hole, and made the following docket upon it: "Year 1, first month of the season, day 2, corresponding to year 19. Copy of the records of the necropolis-thieves, the thieves of the tombs, which was placed before Pharaoh by the mayor of the west of the city, Pewero," and then follows a list of sixteen thieves. Six weeks later, he had to take out the roll again, and add another docket. "Copy of the records of the necropolis-thieves,

which was laid before the vizier, Nebmara-Nakht, by the mayor of the west of the city, Pewero." It is followed by a list of twenty-nine rascals. Forty-five thieves in six weeks formed no bad vindication for the much-abused Paser, and if he got to hear of it, as one hopes that he did, he must have felt that his sufferings had not been in vain !

Nor were Pewero's troubles ended. Shortly after he had given in his second list, the trial of six of his scoundrels was held before the new vizier, Nebmara-nakht, and a commission of several other officials. Our old friend, Nesuamon, no longer appears on the list; perhaps his connection with Pewero was a little too much for the new vizier. The details of the trial, and of a subsequent trial, are given in the Mayer Papyri of the Liverpool Museum, while there is a document relating to the business at Vienna, and three papyri, still unpublished, in the British Museum.

In the trial of the six, the Egyptian police force makes a much better show than it did when it allowed the eight other robbers to slip through its fingers; perhaps Nebmara-nakht had been screwing things up a little. Somehow the chief of police had got wind of the robberies which were going on, and on this occasion he had laid an ambush, and had caught the thieves red-handed. This appears from the minute of the court. "On this day was the examination of the thieves of the tomb of King Ramses II and of the forty houses of King Seti I, which lie in the treasury of the temple-domain of King Ramses III, the thieves

TRIALS OF THE TOMB-ROBBERS 111

whom the chief of police, Nesuimen (not our friend), had reported in a list of their names, for it was he who had stood there with the thieves when they laid their hands on the tombs. They were beaten in examination on their feet and hands, in order to cause them to tell exactly what they did." The extraordinary corruption prevailing among the temple and necropolis staff of the time is manifest from the fact that of the six criminals three are priests, while the others are either officials connected with the temples, or in the employ of such officials. It was no longer merely common workmen of the necropolis who were guilty of the thefts, but the very men whose position should have made them guardians of the sacred dead. Moreover, it is no longer comparatively ancient tombs, or tombs of comparatively undistinguished royalties, which are being attacked, but those of two of the most famous of Egyptian Pharaohs.

The proceedings before the commission followed the usual routine. The accused were beaten on hands and feet, according to the regular method of "examination," until a confession was extracted. Sometimes only a denial was forthcoming, in which case the process was repeated, doubtless with satisfactory results. The most satisfactory thing from our modern point of view is the evidence of the chief of police, which is brief and to the point. "The men were hastening to do violence to this tomb, and I went and found the six men whom the thief Paykamen has named correctly." The care with which the Theban police, who had evidently

been put on their mettle, had got up the case, is clear from the fact that in one instance a son is called in to give witness against his father, and that even the ferryman who ferried the six across the Nile was called as a witness, though it seems hard that he also should have been questioned under the stick, like the actual criminals. "He was examined by beating with the stick. . . . They said to him, 'What was the manner of your ferrying over the thieves whom you ferried?' He said, 'I ferried the thieves over, and they gave me a sack of spelt and two loaves'" (which he had probably thoroughly well earned before the court was done with him). The most amusing feature of the investigation is the scorn with which one of the real criminals, the herdsman, Bukhaaf, rejects the suggestion that a mere butcher, Pennestytauy, had been associated with him in the robbery.

Pennestytauy, on being called, stoutly denies the charge, and his accuser names Bukhaaf, about whose guilt there is no question, as the butcher's accomplice. "Then said the court, 'Let Bukhaaf be brought!' The herdsman, Bukhaaf, was brought. They said to him, 'What hast thou to say?' He said, 'He was not with me at all. What is all this? He seen with Imenkhou, son of Heri, and with Nesuimen? Nonsense! He go with him! He never went!'" The lucky butcher was at once discharged, and one is left wondering whether Bukhaaf's prompt vindication of him was due to the lofty contempt of an aristocrat of the gentle art of tomb-robbery for a mere outsider, or

whether he honestly wanted to save the man. Bukhaaf himself seems to have been a regular practitioner, and confesses to having robbed the tombs of two queens, so that one fears that the ending of the trial was a grim-enough business for him. The broken end of the Papyrus Mayer A sums up the result in a very businesslike manner. "Thieves who were brought before the vizier previously, 7 men. Thieves who were put to death . . . 15 men. Thieves whom Paynehsy slew, 3 men. Imprisoned, 15 men." The list closes with Pennestytauy, the butcher, and another man, who are marked, "Set at liberty."

The last of our documents, Papyrus Mayer B, deals with a robbery or robberies which it is impossible to connect with the other cases, as the papyrus, in its fragmentary state, gives no dates. The surviving portion, however, mutilated as it is, gives us a delightful example of thieves falling out; and the drama of the quarrel of Nesuamon and his friend Pais has been played over and over again in modern times at Thebes, just as it was played three thousand years ago—the only difference, as Professor Peet says, being that the XXth Dynasty lacked the cigarettes and coffee which are now the inevitable concomitants of native discussion. Briefly, the narrative begins with a quarrel over the division of the plunder of a raid on the tomb of the great Pharaoh, Amenhotep III. This is barely settled before a third thief, Pais, calling at the house of Nesuamon, finds there a quantity of stolen silver, and seizes it with the threat that he is going to

report to the police. He is pacified by a promise to allow him to be present himself at the next robbery; and the narrative closes with the report of the success of this venture, in which five men are concerned. The intelligible parts of the papyrus run as follows :

I quarrelled with him, and I said to him, "The division which thou hast made is not at all to my liking; thou hast taken three parts and hast given me one." So said I to him. And we weighed the silver which we had found, and it amounted to 3 deben of silver. He gave me $1\frac{1}{2}$ deben of silver, and himself took $1\frac{1}{2}$ deben of silver—total, 3 deben of silver! (Quite a business-like adjustment of a small difference between friends. The story goes on.) Now after some days, the foreigner, Pais, went to the house of the foreigner, Nesuamon, and found the things lying there, and seized them. Thereupon Nesuamon sent to me saying, "Come!" Now Pais was sitting with him, and Pais said to him, "With regard to the silver which thou didst find, thou hast given me none of it. I am going to report it to the servants of the Prince of the West, and to the police." So said he to us. And we cajoled him and said to him, "We will take thee to the place in which we found it, and thou too shalt bring away some for thyself." So said we to him. Now after some days we made an agreement with the foreigner Pais, and the metal-worker Pentahetnekht, and the metal-worker Heri, and the foreigner Nesuamon, five men in all. We went up in a body, the foreigner Nesuamon leading us up. And he stopped at the tomb of King Nebmaatra-Meryamon, the great god. . . . And we spent four days in breaking into it, we being all five present. We opened the tomb and entered it. . . .

Then follows a much-mutilated list of spoils found, and the broken narrative closes,

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And we weighed the copper of the vessels and we found it to be 500 deben of copper, 100 deben of copper falling to each man. We opened two chests full of garments; we found 35 garments, 7 garments falling to each man. And we found a basket of garments lying there; we opened it, and found 25 in it, 5 garments falling to each man.

Unfortunately, we are never likely to know the end of this remarkably businesslike and self-possessed narrative, in which one scarcely knows whether to admire more the methodical arrangements of the thieves, who, like Billy Bones in *Treasure Island*, were not the ones to be cheated, or the absolutely marvellous considerateness with which King Amenhotep III, two hundred and fifty years before, had arranged his funeral garments and other stores in multiples of five, so that his tomb-robbers might have no difficulty in making an equitable division of his property.

Such, then, are the revelations of the extant Egyptian papyri with regard to the state of morals prevailing in ancient Egypt round about 1120 B.C., and particularly with regard to the state of affairs in the great Theban royal necropolis. We are left with a clear understanding of some of the causes of the rapid decline of Egyptian prestige among the nations—a decline which we shall see clearly manifested in our next papyrus, and also with a clear reason for the frantic terror with which the priests of the royal tombs, within a few years of this date, were hustling the bodies of their dead lords from tomb to tomb, in the vain attempt to escape the tender mercies of the ghouls of Thebes. When even such tombs

as those of Seti I, Ramses II, and Amenhotep III, kings whose names are among the greatest on the long roll of Egyptian Pharaohs, were being subjected to such indignities, it was evident that nothing short of the most drastic measures would ever secure the dead kings and their splendours from desecration. The counsel of despair to which the priests resorted was, of course, the two *caches*, in the unfinished tomb of Queen Astemkheb at Der el-Bahri, and the tomb of Amenhotep II, which were stored with Pharaohs, and which kept their secrets inviolate till they were broken into during the closing years of the nineteenth century by the descendants of the Peweros and Nesuamons of ancient Thebes, whose reward at the hands of modern officialdom was exactly the same as that of their predecessors—the stick and plenty of it.

What became of poor Paser, in all this vindication of his worst charges, we do not know. But one hopes that, belated as his justification was, he was spared to witness it, and to rejoice over the downfall of his slippery colleague on the western bank.

CHAPTER VII

ANCIENT PAPYRI: HISTORICAL AND LEGAL *(continued)*

THE ADVENTURES OF WENAMON

OUR last papyrus of the historical group must be the world-famous report in which are set forth the marvellous adventures and hairbreadth escapes by sea and land of the much-enduring Wenamon—one of the most human documents which have survived from these ancient days ; but also one of the most valuable from the point of view of the historian who wishes to gain the true perspective of the various states of the ancient East, at about 1113 B.C., when the last of the long and feeble line of the Ramesside Pharaohs, Ramses XII, was the nominal ruler of Egypt, but when the actual power was divided between the High-Priest of Amen, Herhor, at Thebes, and Nesubanebted, one of the Delta magnates, at Tanis.

One evening in the year 1891, some fellahs of the village of El Hibeh in Upper Egypt were rummaging for material to make their evening fire. In the process they unearthed a roll of papyrus, a good deal mutilated, and to all

appearance very ancient. Fortunately for the world at large, they were not so benighted as the discoverers of the batch of papyri from which the *Charta Borgiana* is the only survivor, nor had they any theories as to the aromatic qualities of papyrus which they desired to test. They had learned something of the marketable quality of such a find, and the tattered old roll was sold for a small sum to a dealer in antiquities, from whose hands it passed, no doubt at a considerable increase in price, into the competent ones of M. W. Golenischeff, and found a resting-place at what was then St. Petersburg, where, if it has survived the vicissitudes of the last few years, it rests, having passed through stranger haps since its discovery than ever its original author passed during his wanderings along the Syrian coast. To all appearance, it is simply a report, drawn up by an Egyptian official attached to the priestly college of Amen at Thebes, of the facts connected with his journey to Syria on an errand connected with the service of the god. How such a document came to be at El Hibe, instead of in the temple archives at Thebes, it is impossible to say. Conceivably, it may have been the clean copy which Wenamon himself made of his report, rightly holding that such a thrilling narrative should be kept in the family. The suggestion of Sir Gaston Maspero that the whole thing is a kind of romance in glorification of the God "Amen-of-the-Way," just as the romance of the Possessed Princess of Bekhten was written to glorify Khonsu-the-Expeller-of-Demons, will scarcely seem probable to anyone who realises

the force and directness of the narrative. If its series of vivid pictures was produced by a mere romancer, than ancient Egypt possessed a Great Unknown who had a command of convincing detail scarcely inferior to that which Defoe displays in *Robinson Crusoe*.

Wenamón's story is as follows: In the fifth year of Ramses XII (1113 B.C.), Herhor, then High-Priest of Amen at Thebes, and virtual ruler of Upper Egypt, resolves to build a new ceremonial barge for the customary royal progresses of the God during the sacred festivals at Thebes. For such a vessel nothing but the finest cedar of Lebanon could be used, and consequently it was necessary to send an envoy to the Prince of Byblos, the port on the Syrian coast most convenient for the shipping of such wood, just as Solomon, 140 years later, had to send to Hiram, King of Tyre.

The envoy selected for this important task was Wenamón—whose official title was, "The Eldest of the Hall of the House of Amen, the Lord of the Lands"—manifestly a man of standing in the priestly college of Thebes. "It is evident," says Mr. Weigall, in his vivacious version of the story, "that Wenamón was no traveller, and we may perhaps be permitted to picture him as a rather portly gentleman of middle age." Be that as it may, he stuck to his job like a man, in very daunting circumstances, even though he seems to have been possessed of an ever-ready fountain of tears. He wept; but he persisted, and he got his timber in the end, though we do not know how it got to Thebes.

Starting from Thebes, Wenamon made his way down the Nile to the Delta capital, Tanis, where Nesubanebbed, one of the Delta dynasts, ruled Lower Egypt, partly in virtue of his marriage with Tentamen, a princess of royal blood, who appears through the story as sharing her husband's authority. "On the day of my arrival at Tanis," says the envoy, "at the place of abode of Nesubanebbed and Tentamen, I gave to them the writings of Amen-Ra, King of Gods (his credentials and instructions), which they caused to be read in their presence; and they said: 'I will do, I will do according to what Amen-Ra, King of Gods, our Lord saith!' I abode until the fourth month of the third season, being in Tanis." Unfortunately for him, the attractions of Tanis seem so far to have distracted his mind that he forgot to reclaim his letters of credence and commission from the Tanite prince—an omission which was to be fruitful of trouble. Nesubanebbed had no ship of his own sailing for Syria; but a ship was loading at the quay of Tanis, destined for the Syrian coast, and commanded by a Syrian skipper named Mengebet, and Wenamon and his secretary got a passage on board her; and on the fifteenth day after leaving Thebes, they unmoored from Tanis, sailed down-stream to the Nile mouth, and, as Wenamon puts it, "descended into the great Syrian Sea."

Our hero tells us nothing of the coasting voyage which followed; probably we may assume that his feelings on the subject were too deep for words. "As a general rule," says

Mr. Weigall, "the Egyptians are extremely bad sailors." In addition to the horrors of seasickness, Wenamon must have been troubled by the thought that he was responsible for a sum of gold and silver which was to go to pay for the cedar, and whose value has been estimated at £2800; and besides there was a still more precious trust of which he has so far told us nothing, but which can scarcely have failed to weigh heavily upon the anxious man. One figures him and his secretary, in the intervals of still more painful occupations, counting over the precious debens of gold and silver, to see that none had gone amissing; and a rascal of the Syrian crew peeping in through the skylight of the stuffy little cabin, if it had such a luxury as a skylight, or through a crack in the door, and marking that treasure for his own.

In due course, the voyagers arrived at Dor, their first port of call. At this spot, a little south of Carmel, there still survived a little colony of Thekel, possibly Sicilians, who were part of the backwash of the great invasion of the Sea-Peoples, which had left them and the Philistines stranded on the coast of Palestine; and the Thekel prince of Dor, Bedel by name, so soon as he heard of the arrival of an Egyptian envoy, asked no awkward questions about credentials, but at once sent on board an ample store of cakes, a jar of wine, and a joint of beef, which we may imagine the two travellers enjoying, in the comparative calm of the harbour of Dor. But disaster was near, and Wenamon may be left to describe it in his own simple and business-like words. "Then a man

of my ship fled, having stolen . . . vessels of gold, amounting to 5 deben, 4 vessels of silver, amounting to 20 deben, a sack of silver—11 deben. Total of what he stole, 5 deben of gold, 31 deben of silver.” Wenamon makes no comment, and indeed what could be said? Here was a pretty pass for a respectable “Eldest of the Hall of Amen-Ra” to be reduced to! Stranded in a foreign harbour, penniless, his credentials far away at Tanis, and his only refuge that other great responsibility about which he has not yet told us! So far the priest of Amen had not proved a much better business man than priests are generally supposed to be. He determines, however, to put a bold face on the matter, and lay the blame on the shoulders of somebody else.

In the morning then I rose and went to the abode of the prince, and I said to him: “I have been robbed in thy harbour. Since thou art the king of this land, thou art therefore its investigator, who should search for my money. For the money belongs to Amen-Ra, king of gods, the lord of the lands; it belongs to Nesubanebded, and it belongs to Herhor my lord, and the other great ones of Egypt; it belongs also to Weret, and to Mekmel, and to Zakar-Baal, the Prince of Byblos!” He said to me, “With all respect to thy honour and thine excellence, behold I know nothing of this complaint which thou hast lodged with me. If the thief belonged to my land, a man who went on board thy ship that he might steal thy treasure, I would repay it to thee from my treasury till they find thy thief by name; but the thief who robbed thee belongs to thy ship. Tarry a few days here with me, and I will seek him!”

Somehow or other Wenamon apparently

succeeded in inducing the skipper Mengebet to delay his sailing for nine days, and the search for the thief went on; but that now opulent individual was doubtless far enough away from Dor by that time, and at last Mengebet was evidently growing restive at the delay. "When I had spent nine days moored in his harbour, I went to him, and said to him: 'Behold, thou hast not found my money; therefore let me depart with the ship-captain, and with those who.'" . . . Here the unlucky papyrus has suffered one of its mutilations, and we miss all the fine speeches which passed between the Sicilian and the aggrieved Egyptian. Evidently, however, the old demand for compensation was pressed again, and with such persistence that even the patient Bedel, whose courtesy and long-suffering have up to this point been above all praise, loses his temper, and when the story emerges again from the *lacuna*, the first words we catch are those of a justly indignant man who can stand no more impertinence, "He said to me, 'Be silent!'"

Then darkness descends again, and we catch only a broken sentence or two for awhile. "Tyre. . . . I went forth from Tyre at early dawn." And then, tantalisingly broken in upon by mutilations, just at the beginning, where we should have got the setting of the whole happening, comes one of the quaintest of all the adventures of Wenamon, which shows both the tenacity of the worthy man, and the desperate straits to which a decent priest of Amen may be reduced when he is stranded in a strange land without a penny to pay his way. Probably the

thing happens at Sidon, which would naturally be the next port of call after Tyre ; but how it happens the papyrus obstinately refuses to tell us. We may reconstruct the picture somewhat in this fashion. While the ship is lying at her moorings at the quay of Sidon, some Thekel merchants come on board, either to trade with the skipper, or to arrange about the loading of some cargo for Byblos. Wenamon's angry eye recognises them for citizens of the accursed town where he lost his precious debens of gold and silver ; and the chink of their money, as they deal with Mengebet, is too much for his tottering moral code. He calls Mengebet aside—the two apparently are friendly enough—and after a little hesitation the skipper calls up two or three of his hands. A rush is made on the unsuspecting Thekel merchants, as they are packing up to go ashore again, and while the sailors hold the indignant men, Wenamon calmly grabs the bag with their cash. But he has no intention of allowing them to think that he is a mere pirate. This is an act of righteous vengeance on a guilty race—for was it not at Dor that his money was stolen ? He has conveniently forgotten that on his own admission it was one of the sailors of his own ship who was the thief. “. . . I found 30 deben of silver therein. I seized it, saying to them : ‘ I will take your money, and it shall remain with me, until ye find my money. Was it not a man of Thekel who stole it, and no thief of ours ? I will take it.’ . . . They went away,” concludes Wenamon ; and we may imagine how they went away, hustled over the side by half ■

dozen rough sailors, while the rest of the crew were casting off the moorings, and hoisting the mainsail, to get out of the harbour with the stolen goods, before the news spread. Mengebet's part in this little drama, for without his connivance and help the thing would have been impossible, we can easily understand. The line was never very finely drawn in those days between piracy and trade ; and no doubt it was not the first time that the Syrian skipper had been concerned in similar transactions. Besides, he traded to Tanis, and the favour of Nesubanebbed was of more importance to him than the ill-will of a handful of Thekel merchants—uncircumcised Westerners anyway. The amazing thing is the decline and fall of Wenamon ! Had you pictured to him in Thebes that sordid scuffle on the dirty deck of a Syrian coaster in an ill-smelling Phœnician harbour, he would have answered you, " Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing ? " But travel and loss are apt to reveal unsuspected depths in character, and Wenamon pockets his swag, and records the theft in the most matter-of-fact fashion, as though he had been to the manner born. Obviously Stevenson's theory is confirmed again, and there was a latent pirate in this stout and respectable Theban priest.

Fast as the robbers cleared out of Sidon after their adventure, they were apparently outsailed by another ship. All the way Wenamon's guilty conscience had been forecasting trouble ; and now when the harbour of Byblos began to show ahead, he tremulously went below and began to take precautions. It is now that for the first

time he lets us into the secret of the wonderful trust which had been committed to him. This was nothing less than a small, but very precious image of the great god Amen, "Amen-of-the-Way," a kind of patron-god of travellers, the ancient equivalent of the St. Julian of the Middle Ages. Hitherto his avail had not been conspicuous; but he might be expected to impress the folks of Byblos. Anyhow, he was pretty well all that Wenamon had left to trust in; and if he came to grief it was all up with the poor envoy. Wenamon plainly had his doubts as to the kind of reception that he and his companions were going to get at Byblos; perhaps he had seen ■ Thekel ship outsailing them; and he took all the precautions possible to secure "Amen-of-the-Way" and his belongings from harm. "I made ■ place of concealment, I hid Amen-of-the-Way, and I placed his things in it." Nor was he far out in his forebodings. The news of the theft at Sidon had got to Byblos before them; and their mooring-warp was scarcely made fast when the harbour-master of Byblos came down with a curt message from Zakar-Baal, the prince of the city, "Get out of my harbour!" Here was a pretty kettle of fish for the much-enduring envoy of Amen! He sent a piteous message up to the palace, entreating that he might at least be permitted to wait for the first ship that was sailing for Egypt; but day by day for nineteen days the harbour-master appeared with the same message—"Get out of my harbour!"

In spite of his curt orders, however, it is

quite plain that Zakar-Baal did not wish to use force against an Egyptian, no matter what crime he had been guilty of ; and the chances are that some of the palace officials had been having their palms oiled with some of the thirty deben of the Thekel merchants. Whatever the reason, Wenamon was suddenly delivered from his awkward position in a very remarkable manner. He had just given the whole business up in despair. A ship was to sail for Egypt immediately, and he secured a passage on her for himself and his secretary, and put all their baggage on board. All, that is to say, but the one thing which was precious above all price—the little image of Amen-of-the-Way. This was too sacred to be profaned by being carried on board in the vulgar light of day ; and Wenamon hung about the harbour, waiting for the darkness to fall, with the precious image carefully wrapped up and jealously hidden under his cloak. “ I waited for the darkness, saying, ‘ When it descends I will embark the God also, that no other eye may see him.’ ”

At last the night fell, and Wenamon was in the act of slinking on board, when the heavy hand of the harbour-master fell on his shoulder, and his too well-known voice sounded in the shivering Egyptian’s ear. This time, however, it was singing a different song ; instead of, “ Get out of my harbour,” the refrain was, “ Remain near the prince till the morning.” Not unnaturally, Wenamon was more indignant than ever. He saw in this new command nothing but a trick to make him lose the ship which was

sailing that night for Egypt, and he answered the harbour-master very snappishly. "I said to him, 'Art thou not he who continually came to me daily, saying, "Get out of my harbour?"' Dost thou not say, "Remain," in order to let the ship that I have found depart, that thou mayest come and say again, "Away?"'" One imagines the harbour-master soothing the angry man down, and running off to the palace with the news that the Egyptian was determined to sail that night. He came back with a repetition of the new order, "Remain until morning near the king."

The solution of the mystery was this. Some of Wenamon's bakshish had apparently got into the right hands, and that evening as the evening sacrifice was being offered to Baal of Byblos, one of the royal pages fell into a religious frenzy, in which he shouted continually, "Bring the God hither. Bring the messenger of Amen who hath him. Send him, and let him go." This state of possession lasted all evening, and at last at nightfall Zakar-Baal judged it best to obey the divine command, and to summon Wenamon, as we have seen, to his presence. A little less than a century later, we have in the same land the divine frenzy of Saul, the first king of Israel—"Is Saul also among the prophets?" but this instance at Byblos is the first recorded instance of that religious frenzy which was supposed to be the outward sign of possession by the divine spirit.

Wenamon's long-delayed interview with the man to see whom he had come so far, and through



XIII. BARGE OF AN EGYPTIAN GOD.

such trials, is told by him with such vigour that it is best to let him give it to us in his own words.

When morning came, he sent and had me brought up, when sacrifice was offered in the fortress where he was, on the shore of the sea. I found him sitting in his upper chamber, leaning his back against a window, while the waves of the Great Syrian Sea beat against the wall behind him. (Wenamón had an eye for the picturesque quite unusual for his time!) I said to him, "The blessing of Amen upon you!" He said to me, "How long is it until this day since thou camest away from the abode of Amen?" I said, "Five months and one day until now!"

Then came the question which Wenamón had been dreading ever since he left Tanis, forgetting to recover his credentials from Nesubanebbedd.

He said to me, "Behold, if thou art true, where is the writing of Amen, which should be in thy hand? Where is the letter of the High-Priest of Amen, which should be in thy hand?" I said to him, "I gave them to Nesubanebbedd and Tentamen." Then he was very wroth, and he said to me, "Now, behold the writing and the letter are not in thy hand! Where is the ship of cedar which Nesubanebbedd gave to thee, and where is the picked Syrian crew (that he would surely have sent with so important a man)? He would not deliver thy business to this chance ship-captain, who might have had thee killed and cast into the sea. From whom would they have sought thy god then? and from whom would they have sought thee then?" So spake he to me. I said to him, "There are indeed Egyptian ships and Egyptian crews who sail under Nesubanebbedd, but he hath no Syrian crews." He said to me, (Don't talk nonsense), "There are surely twenty ships here in my harbour, which

are in connection with Nesubanebbed, and at this Sidon, where thou also hast been, there are indeed 10,000 ships, which are in connection with Berket-el, and sail to his house."

Things were not going too well, and Wenamon thought it best to lie low.

Then I was silent in that great hour. He answered and said to me, "On what business hast thou come hither?" I said to him, "I have come after the timber for the great and august barge of Amen-Ra, king of gods. Thy father gave it, thy grandfather gave it, and thou also wilt give it." So spake I to him (shaking in my shoes all the time).

Bluff, however, was not of much use with Zakar-Baal, who like the rest of his race was a business man all through.

He said to me, "They did it truly. If thou give me money for doing it, I also will do it. Indeed, my agents put through the business. The Pharaoh (Life! health! strength!) sent six ships, laden with the products of Egypt, and they were unloaded in their storehouses. And thou also shalt bring something for me (if we are to do business)."

Then Wenamon gives a highly interesting and valuable touch to the picture. Zakar-Baal calls for the family ledgers, in which this house of merchant-princes had for generations recorded its transactions! "He had the journals of his fathers brought in, and he had them read before me. They found 1000 deben of every kind of silver, which was in his book." On the same basis on which Wenamon's original supply was calculated, this would amount to a sum of about

£71,000, paid for cedar in past days by Egypt. The transactions had thus been on a large scale. The ledgers, in all probability, were made of Egyptian papyrus, and the entries would be in that ancient Syrian script, the first true alphabet, whose existence as far back as 1300 B.C. has been revealed by recent excavations.

Zakar-Baal now goes on to point the moral of his ledgers and their story, and to indicate quite plainly his independent position.

He said to me, " If the ruler of Egypt were the owner of my property, and I were also his servant, he would not have needed to send silver and gold, saying, ' Do the command of Amen.' It was not the payment of tribute which they exacted of my father (but a business transaction). As for me, I am neither thy servant, nor am I the servant of him that sent thee. If I cry out to the Lebanons, the heavens open, and the logs lie there on the shore of the sea."

After this little bit of brag, Zakar-Baal turns to chaff his victim over his lack of equipment, incidentally admitting the debt which his own country owes to the superior civilisation of Egypt. How, he asks, has the envoy of Amen come so miserably prepared ?

" For Amen equips all lands ; he equips them, having first equipped the land of Egypt whence thou camest. For artisanship came forth from it, to reach my place of abode ; and teaching came forth from it, to reach my place of abode. What then are these miserable journeys that they have had thee make ? "

Zakar-Baal's chaff stings Wenamon into angry rejoinder.

I said to him (or at least I hope that I said), "O guilty one! These are no miserable journeys on which I am. There is no ship upon the river which Amen does not own. For his is the sea, and his this Lebanon, of which thou sayest 'It is mine!' It grows only for 'Userhet' the barge of Amen, the lord of every ship. . . . But, behold, thou hast let this great god wait twenty-nine days in thy harbour, though thou didst certainly know he was there. He is as great as ever he was, while thou standest and bargainest for the Lebanon with Amen its lord. As for what thou sayest, that the former Pharaohs sent silver and gold, if they had sent life and health, they would not have sent the valuables; but they sent the valuables to thy fathers, instead of sending life and health. . . . Now thou, thou also art the servant of Amen. If thou sayest to Amen, 'I will do it, I will do it,' and thou executest his command, thou shalt live, and thou shalt be prosperous, and thou shalt be healthy, and thou shalt be pleasant to thy whole land and thy people. Thou shalt not need to wish for thyself a thing belonging to Amen-Ra, king of gods; for verily the lion loves his own. Let my scribe be brought to me that I may send him to Nesubanebded and Tentamen, the rulers whom Amen hath given to the North of his land, and they will send all of that of which I shall write to them, saying, 'Let it be brought,' until I return to the South, and send thee all, all thy trifles again!" So spake I to him,

says Wenamon, drawing a long breath of satisfaction as he finishes this long section of his report. We may doubt if he was quite so eloquent or so convincing in the palace of Zakar-Baal as when sitting at El Hibe, with a sheet of papyrus before him and a reed-pen in his hand; but doubtless the good man did his best.

Whether Zakar-Baal was impressed by the

promise of the blessings of Amen, or by the offer to send the secretary back to Tanis for more material blessings, some impression was made at all events on his hard heart. Wenamon dispatched his secretary to Egypt by the first ship, and pending his return, Zakar-Baal allowed the most important timbers of the barge of Amen, the keel, the forefoot, the sternpost, and four other great beams, to be sent with him. In forty-eight days the messenger returned with gold and silver, 500 rolls of papyrus, linen, cordage, dried fish, and oxhides, while Tentamen sent a special present for Wenamon himself. Zakar-Baal evidently considered this payment on account sufficient to warrant him in going on with the contract. "The prince rejoiced, and detailed 300 men and 300 oxen, placing overseers over them, to have the trees felled. In the third month of the second season they dragged them to the shore of the sea. The prince came forth and stood beside them." Friendly as he now was, however, he and his courtiers could not resist the temptation to have their rough joke at the expense of the outlander, who evidently thought himself so superior to them.

As Wenamon stood looking with joy in his heart at the goodly cedar logs for which he had suffered so much, the shadow of the prince's umbrella fell upon him. Penamon, the prince's butler, whose Egyptian name shows that Egyptian influence was not quite dead in Byblos, at once nudged him, and said with a chuckle, "Lo! the shadow of Pharaoh, thy Lord, falls upon thee." The joke is not quite apparent to us; but it seems

to have lain in the suggestion that now that the shadow of Zakar-Baal had fallen on Wenamon he had become the servant of the Prince of Byblos. Penamon, however, had over-stepped the mark, and Zakar-Baal angrily snapped at him, "Let the man alone!" Then, turning to the Egyptian, he said, "I have done as my fathers did, though thou hast not done for me what thy fathers did. Behold, there has arrived the last of thy timber, and there it lies. Do according to my desire and come to load, for it will be handed over to thee."

Wenamon's thoughts were too deep for words. Seemingly he could not speak, but stood looking out over the angry sea, which he had still to traverse with his precious cargo; and the sight of his anxious face made Zakar-Baal feel that he could not let him off without another bit of rough chaff. . . . "After all," he said, "you are better off than the envoys whom Ramses IX sent here, for they were detained for seventeen years, and died here. Come not to contemplate the terror of the sea; but if thou dost contemplate the terror of the sea, thou shalt also contemplate my terror. Indeed, I have not done to thee that which they did to the messengers of Ramses IX, when they spent seventeen years in this land, and died in this place." He said to his butler, "Take him, and let him see their tomb wherein they sleep."

The suggestion was too much for Wenamon's much-trying nerves. "No!" he cried, "let me not see it! mere people were the messengers whom Ramses IX sent; there was no god among

his messengers. And yet thou sayest, 'Go, and see thy companions.'" And then the worthy man girded up his loins to give back to Zakar-Baal as good as he had given. "All the same," he said, "you are really as proud as you can be at having had to do with me. Don't I know that thou wilt have made for thee a stele whereon thou wilt say, 'Amen-Ra, king of gods, sent to me his divine messenger, Amen-of-the-Way, and Wenamon his human messenger, after the timber for the great and august barge of Amen-Ra, king of gods. I felled it, I loaded it, I supplied him with my ships and my crews, I brought them to Egypt, to beseech for me 10,000 years of life from Amen, more than my ordained life; and it came to pass.' Then," Wenamon wound up, keeping his sorest thrust for the last, "in future days" (when of course you are in hell anyway), "when any messenger comes from the land of Egypt who is able to write, and reads thy name upon the stele, thou shalt receive water in the West, like the gods who are there." "It is a great testimony," said Zakar-Baal, "which thou tellest me"—put in modern speech, "You are drawing the long-bow now, anyway."

The whole business now being satisfactorily adjusted, Wenamon gave his pledge to see that the remainder of the price was duly paid when he got back to Thebes, and went down to the beach to gloat over his beloved cedar logs. Happening to lift his eyes, he saw eleven Thekel ships coming into the harbour, and as they passed the mole-head, and the harbour-master hailed them to ask their business, the poor envoy of Amen

was staggered to hear the answer, " Arrest Wenamon ! let not a ship of his pass to Egypt ! " It was his old sin of Sidon finding him out again ! Little wonder that the poor man broke down entirely. From his high window overlooking the beach the prince saw his miserable plight and sent down his scribe to ask what the matter might be. " I said to him, ' Surely thou seest these vultures which have twice descended upon Egypt. Behold them. They have come to the harbour, and I, how long shall I be here forsaken ? For thou seest surely those who come to arrest me again ! ' " And with these words we may suppose Wenamon dissolved in tears once more.

The scribe reported to his master, who, good man, wept with those who weep—probably as much because he foresaw international complications, as out of sympathy with the envoy. However, he did his best to comfort the sufferer with comforts both material and spiritual, if you can call them so. . . . For the body he sent down two jars of wine and a ram. The bruised spirit was another matter ; but there was in Byblos an Egyptian minstrel-lady named Tentnut. How she came to be there, or what she was doing there, is not told us, and perhaps it is just as well. Zakar-Baal sent for her, and she came to the palace, no doubt wondering whether she was to sing before the prince, or to have a deportation-order served upon her. This rather unusual angel of mercy was forthwith sent down to Wenamon to help him through with the two jars of wine and the ram. " Sing to him," said



XIV. STATUE OF SENUSERT III.
(Grey Granite. British Museum.)

the prince. "Let not his heart feel apprehension." To Wenamon himself he sent a royal message. "Eat, drink, and let not thy heart feel apprehension. Thou shalt hear all that I have to say in the morning."

When morning came, the tender mercies of the prince did not amount to a great deal. Plainly he was in a strait between the desire to keep well with Egypt, and the fear of offending a dangerous squadron of Thekel pirates. The final decision was a curious compromise. "He said to them, 'I cannot arrest the messenger of Amen in my land. Let me send him away, and ye shall pursue him, to arrest him.'" It was a sporting offer; but probably Wenamon had his own opinions as to the chance of his escaping, in a dull-sailing merchant-ship, from the swift galleys of the pirates. Zakar-Baal, however, must surely have insisted on "space and law" for the poor deputy of Amen, before he loosed the Sicilian pirates on his track. Anyhow, when Wenamon's galley put her nose outside the mole of Byblos, a furious gale was blowing. The lumbering merchantman was driven helplessly north-westwards before the wind, and when the pirates saw the kind of weather that Wenamon was making, they probably kept their lighter galleys at their moorings, and trusted to the storm to complete their vengeance; at least we hear no more of them.

The battered vessel was cast, like another Egyptian galley with a messenger of God on board, "on a certain island"—in this case Cyprus; but the Cypriots did not show the same

kindness to Wenamon that the Maltese did to St. Paul. In those days, and indeed till recent times, shipwrecked mariners were looked on in most lands as fair game for the people on whose coasts they had been driven ; and the Cypriots promptly prepared to slay Wenamon and his Phœnician crew, and take possession of their belongings. The poor envoy, thinking that his last hour had now surely come, was dragged along in the midst of a tumultuous crowd to the neighbouring town. Fortunately for him, the road led past the palace of Hatiba, the queen of the island ; and still more fortunately, she was just coming out of the gates as the rabble rushed by. Wenamon broke from the hands which held him, and flung himself in the dust at the queen's feet ; then rising, " Surely," he cried, " there is someone among you who understands Egyptian." One of the courtiers came forward. " I understand it," he said. Wenamon breathed again. Now he was in his own element, where talking was to be done ; and it was with quite a rhetorical flourish, most creditable in a man half drowned, and still suffering from the agonies of sea-sickness, that he began. " Say to thy mistress : ' I have heard as far as Thebes, the abode of Amen, that in every city injustice is done, but that justice is done in the land of Alasa (Cyprus) ; but lo, injustice is done every day here.' "

Interested by this judicious mixture of flattery and accusation, Queen Hatiba replies : " Indeed ! What is this that thou sayest ? " " I said to her," says our hero—it is the last time that we shall

hear his familiar grandiloquence—"If the sea raged and the wind drove me to the land where I am, thou wilt not let them take advantage of me to slay me; I being a messenger of Amen. I am one for whom they will seek unceasingly." One fancied Wenamon swelling out his chest and saying that with an air. "As for the crew of the Prince of Byblos, whom they sought to kill, their lord will surely find ten crews of thine, and he will slay them, on his part." Hatiba was impressed. "She had the people called and stationed before her; she said to me, 'Pass the night'" . . . but where Wenamon was to pass the night, or what was to happen to him on the morrow, or how he got back to his beloved Egypt, we shall never, in all likelihood, know, for the papyrus breaks off at this point, and our last vision is of the draggled but eloquent figure, one arm tightly folded round the precious image of Amen-of-the-Way, the other waving largely over the crowd, as he expatiates on how great a man he is in his own country, and how terrible will be the vengeance taken on those who ill-use him.

Get home he certainly did, for we have his report to show it; and we may indeed be thankful that he survived all his trials, for no more human document, and none more enlightening, has survived from these ancient days. Wenamon's story is the kind of thing that makes history no longer a valley of dry bones, but clothes the bones with flesh and sinew, and breathes life into the nerveless frames.

CHAPTER VIII

ANCIENT POPYRI: POETRY

EGYPTIAN literature is not, on the whole, strong in poetry, though it possesses one or two pieces of a type similar to the moralisings of *Ecclesiastes* on the shortness of life, and the need of making the most of it while it endures, which have a solemn and mournful dignity, and some of its little love-songs have a simple grace and tenderness which makes them seem fresh and sweet to us, even after so many millenniums. In historical, or Epic poetry, where one would have expected a nation rapidly developing a great historic destiny to reveal its consciousness of the power that was stirring within it, Egypt is singularly barren. We find nothing which can be even remotely compared to the Epic poetry of the great nations of Classical Antiquity, for though the so-called "Poem of Pentaur" has occasionally been called by enthusiasts devoid of a sense of proportion "The Egyptian *Iliad*," the comparison is one of those unfortunate ones which bring down ridicule, instead of praise, on the work which is thus vainly thrust into hopeless competition with things too great for it. Indeed, a comparison is scarcely possible even with the great sister civilisation of

Babylonia in this respect ; Egypt has nothing to set beside the Epic of Gilgamesh. At the same time, there are two or three historical pieces which are not devoid of a certain merit, and which deserve attention, were it only for the fact that they exhibit, at an exceedingly early stage, some of the subtleties of form and the conscious submission to certain definite laws of structure, which we find characteristic of Oriental poetry all through.

Perhaps the most remarkable, as it is also the earliest, example of this poetical form is that given by the famous Ode to Senusert III. The papyrus which contains this earliest of Egyptian poems, " exhibiting rigid strophic structure and all the conscious artificialities of literary art," was found by Flinders Petrie, along with various other papyri, wills, medical and veterinary treatises, and letters and memoranda, during his excavation of the XIIth Dynasty pyramid-town of Kahun, known to the ancient Egyptians as Hotep-Senusert, " Senusert Rests," beside the pyramid of Senusert II at Illahun, near the mouth of the Fayum. A short quotation from the poem itself will exhibit, better than any description, its rigidity of form and structure, and its resemblance, in this respect, to later and more familiar religious poetry of the East.

Twice joyful are the Gods,
 for thou hast established their offerings.
 Twice joyful are thy princes,
 for thou hast formed their boundaries.
 Twice joyful are thy ancestors before thee,
 for thou hast increased their portions.

Twice joyful is Egypt at thy strong arm,
 for thou hast guarded the ancient order.
 Twice joyful are the aged with thy administration,
 for thou hast widened their possessions.
 Twice joyful are the Two Lands with thy valour,
 for thou hast caused them to flourish. . . .

* * * * *

Twice great is the king of his city,
 for he is a multitude and an host.
 Twice great is the king of his city,
 for he is a flood-gate, pouring forth streams of its
 water-floods.
 Twice great is the king of his city,
 for he is a cool lodge, letting every man lie down in
 the mid-day heat.

The poem consists of six strophes, each of ten double lines, and the structure is obviously closely akin to that which is so familiar to us in the Hebrew Psalter. As one reads, the rhythm of such a psalm as the CXXXVIth is at once suggested, as forcibly as the CIVth is suggested by the matter and outlook of Akhenaten's Hymn to the Aten.

O give thanks unto the Lord ; for he is good ;
 for his mercy endureth for ever.
 O give thanks unto the God of gods,
 for his mercy endureth for ever.

The hymn of praise to the great champion of the Middle Kingdom may be compared with that which was inspired by the conquests of the great champion of the New Empire, Thothmes III, and is recorded on his stele, now in the Cairo Museum.

I have come, giving thee to crush the princes of Zahi (Phœnicia),
 I throw them under thy feet among their mountains ;
 I have made them see Thy Majesty as a lord of shining
 splendour,
 When thou shinest before them in my likeness.

* * * * *

I have come, giving thee to smite the eastern land,
 Thou hast trampled those who dwell in the provinces of
 God's Land ;
 I grant that they may see Thy Majesty as the comet,
 Which rains down the heat of its flame, and sheds its
 dew . . .

The parallelisms of the earliest hymn have evidently become the consecrated form for such a poem, for the structure, in spite of modifications, is essentially the same ; and it was adopted, with even less change, in the poem in honour of Seti I, of the XIXth Dynasty.

Much more ambitious than these earlier productions is the so-called " Poem of Pentaur," which has been already mentioned, and which records the valour of Ramses II at the Battle of Kadesh. The great deeds of Ramses, which evidently to his mind, or perhaps rather to his vanity, completely atoned for the bungling generalship which had placed him and his army in a position where such feats were necessary, early found a chronicler in the person of an unknown court scribe, who produced what Breasted calls, " the nearest approach to the epic to be found in Egyptian literature." The poem, such as it is, evidently found high favour in the eyes of the man whom it celebrated, for he caused it to be engraved on the walls of his new additions to the temples of Karnak and Luxor.

It is not with these versions, however, that we have to do, but with the copy on papyrus, which was made, seventy years later, apparently as a school-exercise, by the scribe Pentaur or Pentuwere, whose name has thus become attached to a composition which was probably written before he was born. He tells us, indeed, in the mutilated conclusion of his copy, that the poem was "written in the year 7, month Payni, in the reign of King Ramses Mer-Amen, Giver of life forever and ever like his father Ra . . . to the Head Guardian of the royal writings . . . by the Royal Scribe Pentaur"; but this statement, which fixes the poem to a date as early as two years after the Battle of Kadesh, can only refer to the original composition, and not to his transcript of it, for we know that he was living in the tenth year of the reign of Ramses' son and successor Merenptah, which would carry his tale of years at least to the limit of Egyptian ambition in this respect. If he was mature enough to write the poem in the seventh year of Ramses, it is, to say the least, improbable that he should be writing school-exercises seventy years later.

Pentaur's copy fell into the hands of the Egyptian sailor from whom it and several other papyri were purchased by M. Sallier, in whose collection, now in the British Museum, it forms Papyrus Sallier III. A fragment, now in the Louvre, acquired from the collection of M. Raifet, supplies some of the defective portion at the beginning of the Sallier document, and describes the earlier moves in the campaign, and the gathering of the Hittite hosts. Papyrus



XV. SCENE FROM RELIEF OF THE BATTLE OF KADESH



Sallier III was seen in 1828 by Champollion, who was able to apply to it the principles of his great discovery of the meaning of the Hieroglyphic script, and its variations. He was able to read enough of it to see that it referred to a war between the Egyptians, under Ramses II, and a people whose name he read as the *Scheto*, and whom he imagined to be the Scythians. The true reading, of course, was *Kheta*, and the people in question are the Hittites. In 1835, Champollion's pupil, Salvolini, succeeded in giving an analysis of part of the document in his "Campagne de Rhamses le grand (Sesostris), contre les Scheta, et leurs alliés," and the papyrus was published in facsimile, with notes by Birch, embodying some of Salvolini's conclusions, in the *Select Papyri in the Hieratic Character*, Parts I and III (1844). The first approximately complete rendering of it was given by de Rougé in 1856, and since then it has been translated again and again, till it is probably as well and as accurately known as any record of the past.

The merits of the poem are not very great. Erman's criticism is not unwarranted. "Unfortunately, the poem is spun out interminably . . . the action scarcely advances at all. The king expatiates unweariedly on his heroic courage, on the faint-heartedness of his soldiers, and the discomfiture of the enemy. Thus, in this so-called *epic* there is little action and much discourse." Something, of course, must be allowed to the dilemma of a court poet, who probably knew the facts well enough, but found

himself obliged to recount, not what actually happened, but what Ramses wished the world to believe. "Il est fatigant," whispers Mr. St. John, "avec sa trompette de Wynendael," as stout General Webb fights his immortal battle over again for the fiftieth time. The courtiers of Ramses II had sixty-one years' practice in listening to the story of the king's valour at Kadesh, and even their politeness must have been hard put to it to restrain their yawns, when the old king began for the ten-thousandth time to repeat the long-drawn tale of things that happened in their grandfather's time, and that never ought to have happened at all, had not Ramses been a stupid general.

All the same, the poem, in spite of its obvious defects, is not altogether without a certain force and vividness in some of its passages. Perhaps as fair a specimen of its merits may be gained from the passage where Ramses encourages his charioteer, Menna, as from any other part of the poem, while the earlier part, in which the king's action in the moment when he perceives his peril is described, is not without picturesqueness.

Then his Majesty arose like Mentu,
 He seized his panoply of war,
 He clad him in his habergeon,
 Himself like Baal in his hour.
 The great horses that were with his Majesty,
 Named "Victories in Thebes,"
 Were from the stable of Usermara, chosen of Ra, beloved of
 Amen.
 Then did his Majesty dash on ;
 Then he entered into the midst of the foes, of the vile Kheta ;
 He alone by himself, no other with him ;

When his Majesty turned to look behind him,
He found around him 2500 chariots in his outward way ;

* * * * *

When Menna, my charioteer, beheld that,
Namely multitudes of chariots completely around me,
He became weak, his heart failed,
A very great terror went through his limbs ;
Behold he said to his Majesty—
“ My good Lord ! My brave prince !
Oh mighty strength of Egypt in the day of battle !
We are standing alone in the midst of the enemy ;
Behold they abandon us, the soldiers and the chariots ;
Make a stand to save the breath of our lips !
O save us, Ramessu, loved of Amen, My good Lord ! ”
Then said his Majesty to his charioteer,
“ Steady ! steady thy heart, my charioteer,
I am going in among them like the striking of a hawk,
I shall slay in smiting, and throw in the dust.
What is in thy heart about these Asiatics ?
By Amen, they are extremely vile in ignoring God !
I would never turn my face for millions of them ! ”
His Majesty then led rapidly,
He arose and penetrated the enemy ;
Six times he penetrated in among them.
He was like Baal behind them in the time of his power ;
He was slaying among them, none escaping him.

It is not great poetry ; but it has its merits.
If it reads at times somewhat like a mixture of
poetry and the *Court Circular*, one must
remember that it was made to the order of a
vain and exacting Oriental sovereign, whose
views had to be met, at considerable peril to the
poet if he did not lay the colour brightly enough
on the king's valour ; also that this is the first
of such poems, written a century before the Siege
of Troy and six centuries before Homer's
immortal song took shape. Much had to be

learned before the Epic reached its full development ; the surprising thing is to find the first essay so good as it is.

Infinitely superior in point of poetic quality to this official production are some of the poems in which the Egyptian moralises on the shortness and uncertainty of life, and preaches the old doctrine, *Carpe diem*, so often on the lips of the moralists of the ancient world. The most famous example of this class of poetical composition is found in Papyrus Harris 500 (British Museum 10060), and also in a papyrus at Leyden, while a later form of it is inscribed upon the walls of the tomb of Neferhotep at Thebes. The actual manuscript probably dates from the latter part of the XVIIIth Dynasty, but the poem claims to belong to the time of one of the Antefs of the XIth Dynasty, somewhere before 2000 B.C., and there is no reason to question the claim, for the thoughts of the poem are such as belong, not to one age, but to all. The title of the poem is, " The Song of the House of King Antuf, deceased, which is written in front of the Harper." It has been frequently translated, and most of the modern versions do at least some justice to the solemn dignity and power of the original.

How happy is this good prince !
This goodly destiny is fulfilled :
The body perishes, passing away,
While others abide, since the time of the ancestors.
The gods who were aforesaid rest in their pyramids ;
Likewise the noble and the wise, entombed in their
 sepulchres.

As for those who built houses, their place is no more ;
 Behold, what hath become of them.
 I have heard the words of Imhotep and Hordadef,
 Whose sayings are held in high repute ;
 Yet how are their habitations ?
 Their walls are in ruin,
 Their places are no more,
 As if they had never been.
 None cometh from thence,
 That he might tell us of their state ;
 That he might restore our hearts,
 Until we too depart to the place
 Whither they have gone.
 Encourage thine heart to forget it,
 And let the heart follow its desire so long as thou livest.
 Put myrrh upon thine head,
 Clothe thee in fine linen,
 Sprinkled with costly ointments,
 The true gifts of the gods.
 Increase yet more thy delights,
 Let not thine heart be weary,
 Follow thy desire and thy pleasure,
 And shape thine affairs upon earth
 After the dictates of thine heart,
 Till that day of lamentation cometh to thee
 When the stilled heart hears not their weeping
 For mourning recalls no man from the tomb.
 Celebrate the joyful day,
 But rest not therein !
 For lo, none taketh his goods with him,
 Yea, no man returneth again, that is gone thither.

The version in the tomb of Neferhotep
 preaches the same doctrine :

Celebrate a joyful day, O priest,
 Place oils and sweet odours for thy nostril,
 Wreaths of lotus-flowers for thy limbs,
 For the body of thy sister, who dwells in thine heart,
 Who sits beside thee.

Let there be music and singing before thee,
Cast behind thee all cares, and mind thee of joy,
Till there cometh that day when we journey to the land that
loveth silence.

“Go thy way,” said the Preacher, the son of David, King in Jerusalem, “eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works. Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity. . . . Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.”

Among the most charming things which have come down to us in Egyptian literature are the little love-songs which have survived in such papyri as Harris 500, and the Turin Papyrus 79-83. The characteristics of the Egyptian love-song are well marked. The Egyptian, in his songs, at all events, shows little of the passion which characterises the love-poetry of many other lands. His affection, when he expresses it in poetical form, is a comparatively placid and equable sentiment, soaring to no lofty altitudes, and perfectly satisfied with simple, sensuous well-being. The ideal joy which he desires, is a day of peaceful companionship with the loved one in the quiet of a beautiful garden, where the shadows of well-laden fruit-trees fall across the lawns, and the waters of the tank are gently ruffled by the cool north wind. There, in such

pleasant surroundings, and not forgetting such merely creature comforts as :

Beer of every kind,
With all manner of bread,
Flowers of yesterday and to-day,
And all kinds of refreshing fruit.

“To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Naacara’s hair,”

was the chiefest joy that heart could desire or at least express. It is not a very exalted plane, but perhaps it is not much lower than Omar’s

Book of verses underneath the Bough,
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness,

and we owe the old singers of these ancient loves a meed of gratitude for the dainty and charming pictures of Egyptian life which they have left us in their simple little songs.

What could be prettier than the picture of the sycamore which shelters the lovers in the well-known love-poem of the Turin Papyrus ?

The little Sycamore
Which she planted with her hand,
She begins to speak,
And her words are as drops of honey.
She is charming, her bower is green,
Greener than the papyrus.
She is laden with fruit,
Redder than the ruby.
The colour of her leaves is as glass,
Her stem is as the colour of the opal . . .
It is cool in her shadow.

It is just after this charming description that

the beloved sends forth her summons to her "brother," as the Egyptian called a sweetheart, to come that he might partake of the joys already described.

She sends her letter by a little maiden
The daughter of her chief gardener ;
She makes her haste to her beloved :
"Come and linger in the garden . . .
The servants who belong to thee
Come with the dinner things ;" . . .

and then follows the description of the feast already quoted. The little sycamore looks down benignly on the happy lovers, and comments on their happiness :

Thy companion sits at thy right hand,
Thou dost make him drink,
And then thou dost follow what he says . . .
I am of a silent nature,
And I do not tell what I see,
And I do not chatter.

From Harris 500, we have such songs : "The beautiful gladsome songs of thy sister, whom thy heart loves, who walks in the fields," as the title has it, as that in which the damsel of sporting proclivities bewails the fact that the sickness of love has so killed her desire for her once-loved sport of fowling that she can no longer rouse herself even to open the snare though she knows that the quarry is within it.

The cry of the goose wails,
It is caught by the decoy.
Thy love makes me tremble,
And I cannot loose the snare.
I will carry my net away.

What will my mother say when I come to her?
 Every day I return laden with my spoil,
 But to-day I have set no snare,
 For thy love has taken possession of me.

When Tennyson wrote of the "birds in the high Hall garden" who were calling the name of the loved one, he probably never dreamed that he had been anticipated by the love-lorn damsel who in Harris 500 sings thus:

The voice of the dove speaks,
 She says, "The world is light, look out!"
 Thou, O bird, dost entice me.
 Then I find my brother in his room,
 And my heart is joyful . . .
 I will not turn away from thee,
 For my heart remains in thy hand,
 When I go out I am with thee in all beautiful places.

Sometimes it is the turn of the lover to express the depth of his passion for his beloved, as in the case of the young man who complains in the same papyrus that love has reduced him to the sad condition of which Erman's translation gives us the literal truth:

I will lie down in my room,
 I am sick indeed through violence (of love).
 My neighbours come to visit me;
 Yet if my sister came with them,
 She would put all the doctors to shame,
 For she understands my sickness.

"Sister," of course, is the Egyptian term for the beloved, as "Brother" for the lover. Apart from the little conceit of the idea the literal rendering is prosaic enough; but Mr. A. E. P. Weigall has rendered it in a fashion which shows

how little may be needed to turn a prosaic version into a really pretty verse, and which suggests how much these old love-songs suffer, in general, in their passage from one medium to another.

While in my room I lie all day
 In pain that will not pass away,
 The neighbours come and go.
 Ah, if with them my darling came,
 The doctors would be put to shame :
She understands my woe.

Perhaps the prettiest of all these songs which we owe to the invaluable Harris Collection—prettiest at least in conception, however much it may suffer in translation—is that in which the maiden who sings is weaving a wreath of flowers, and each flower which she fastens into her chaplet suggests a fresh thought about her lover, and gives her the opening word of a fresh verse of her song. Even a literal rendering cannot altogether destroy the simple freshness of the old song.

Blush-roses are in it, one *blushes* before thee.
 I am thy first sister,
 And thou art to me as the garden
 Which I have planted with flowers
 And all sweet-smelling herbs.
 I directed a canal into it,
 That thou mightest dip thy hand in it,
 When the north wind blows cool.
 Beautiful to me is the place where we walk,
 Thine hand resting within mine,
 With thoughtful mind, and joyful heart
 Because we walk together.
 It is like wine to me to hear thy voice,
 For my life hangs on my hearing thee.
 Better to me than food and drink it is to see thee.

Such frivolous little things as these may seem out of place in connection with the study of a subject of such dignified antiquity and general mustiness as Egyptian papyri ; but one of the charms of the papyri, as we see here, and shall see more and more when we come to deal with the personal letters so common among the Græco-Roman papyri, is just the freshness of their humanity. Archæology, dealing, as it does with such vast stretches of time, and such long-departed ages of human activity, is sometimes looked on, and sometimes presented, as if it were a dehumanised science of the past, as if the thousands of years which have rolled between the men and women whose relics we unearth and study and ourselves forbade all sympathy and all interest in their real humanity. So long as archæology is content to take such a view of its functions, or to be so misrepresented, it will remain the dullest and most sterile of sciences. Rightly viewed, the relics of the past have no significance, apart from the humanity which used them for its self-expression. Pharaoh's crown and sword are precious to us, not because they are cunningly wrought gold or bronze, but because they were first the expression of the skill and taste of master-craftsmen of long ago, and next were worn or used by a man of like passions with ourselves in the day of his glory or his struggle. A papyrus interests us, not because it is three or four thousand years old, but because it bears upon its brown surface the record of the thoughts and questionings, the loves and hates, the hopes and fears of men and women who were

once as vividly alive as we are now. If our study of the past does not end in making it live for us as surely as the present, it is merely vanity and a striving after wind. Sir Flinders Petrie has put the whole matter vividly before the mind in his remark that "you cannot understand your daily newspaper without the past, or the past without your daily newspaper"; and such a statement is the complete vindication of the time we have spent in learning that the ancient Egyptian was one with ourselves in all that makes human life. It is his frivolities, perhaps, more than his great achievements, that bring him alongside us, and make us feel our common brotherhood.

CHAPTER IX

ANCIENT POPYRI: FICTION

IF what was said at the end of the preceding chapter be true with regard to the trifling little love-poems, as some would call them, which fortune has preserved for us, when so many other documents of serious and weighty import have perished, it is still more true with regard to another branch of literature to which we are more indebted than to any other record of the past for our conception of the ancient Egyptian as a human being, who bled when you pricked him, laughed when you tickled him, and in all respects answered to Shylock's criteria of common humanity—I mean the fiction which has survived from these ancient days.

There is little need to labour the importance of a nation's fiction as an evidence of its national characteristics, its tastes and customs; the thing is obvious, though not so much acknowledged as it might be. When we wish to get a vivid picture of the state of the British Navy in the middle of the eighteenth century, nine men out of every ten will turn, and rightly, not to official reports, but to Smollett's *Roderick Random* and to Walter's *Anson's Voyage*; and of these nine,

eight will take the novelist's picture in preference to that of the chaplain of the *Centurion*, admirable though the chronicle of the latter may be. When we wish to learn of how our ancestors of the beginning and middle of the nineteenth century lived and thought, worked and amused themselves, we turn, not to the *Annual Register*, but to *Vanity Fair* and *Pendennis*, or to *Oliver Twist* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*. So, when we want to learn what the Egyptian of three thousand or four thousand years ago thought, what were his tastes, his recreations, his weaknesses, and his whole outlook upon life, we turn, not to the pompous records of his Pharaohs, not even to the Wisdom books, where so much of the canny practical common-sense of those days has found expression, but to the trifling little stories to which Madame D'Orbiney was the first to introduce us by her purchase of the old papyrus which had belonged to Seti II when he was Crown Prince of Egypt, and which contained the famous *Tale of the Two Brothers*, Anpu and Bata. After all, that fact about the papyrus is much the most interesting fact that we know about Seti II. Apart from it, he is *parvi nominis umbra*—a shadow Pharaoh, possessing even less solidity than the average of his race; but he begins to be a real man to me when I learn that he liked a novel, as I do, and that when he was in a position of greater freedom and less responsibility than he afterwards occupied on the throne, he bought novels, or at least a novel, for his library.

“The lofty personages,” says Maspero, in

the Introduction to his charming *Contes Populaires* (he is speaking of this very story), "The lofty personages whose mummies repose in our museums had a reputation for gravity so thoroughly established, that nobody suspected them of having ever diverted themselves with such futilities, in those days when they were only mummies in expectation." That is just the point. In so far as we did not suspect those lofty personages of being guilty of such human and endearing frailties as the love of a good story, we were showing our ignorance of them, judging them unhistorically, and doing them a decided injustice. Far too much ancient history has been, so to speak, "Mummy-History," and therefore untrue; for history was not enacted by mummies, no matter how beautifully wrapped, or how wonderfully preserved, but by living men and women. It is not the impassive mummies, with their reputation for gravity, thoroughly well deserved now for the last three thousand years since they became mummies, that we want to get at; it is the folk who were only "mummies in expectation," who lived and loved, hated and fought, and made fools of themselves, like ourselves and other people; and only their stories will tell you anything about what you want in this respect.

The great historical inscriptions can tell you nothing of this, which is the real interest of the past; the religious literature, interesting as it may be, touches only one aspect, and that presented through the medium of priestly interpretation, which has often only made darkness

visible ; even in the Wisdom Literature, you get not the real unregenerate man, but the man with all the tangles of his thought carefully combed out and arranged, in the consciousness that he is about to make his bow to the discerning public ; but in the fiction you get the real man, the things he liked to hear about, the kind of man he liked to fancy himself as being, presented to you without any of the conventions which hinder you in the other cases from seeing the essential facts. I propose, therefore, to give a short account of one or two of the most remarkable of these ancient pieces of fiction, in which the Egyptian embodied his thoughts and ideals of life.

For our first example, we turn once more to that extraordinary treasure-chamber of romance and poetry, Papyrus Harris 500, which has already yielded us such gems as the tale of Tahuti and the Foe in Joppa, and the Love-Songs. The Story of the Doomed Prince, which is perhaps the most artfully constructed of these Egyptian tales, according to our idea of how a story should be built, has unfortunately suffered a good deal from the disastrous explosion, which, as already mentioned, mutilated Harris 500 so badly. There is a tradition that Mr. Harris, before the disaster, made a copy of the tale, which contained the portions which are now lacking in the original ; but, alas ! no one knows what has become of this copy, which, if it could be found, might settle many difficulties, and incidentally provide a useful criterion of the differences in taste, and in accurate interpretation of the

Egyptian spirit, of the numerous authors who have endeavoured to complete the story, from Ebers to Andrew Lang. Apart from the loss of several single lines of the text, a considerable portion of its fourth page is almost completely effaced, and the fifth page has also suffered severe loss. As so often happens with these losses, the missing portion occurs just at the point where it is most important that the manuscript should be complete, where we are waiting for the *dénouement* of the whole business. "The conclusion is manifest," says Maspero, "thanks to the indications furnished by tales of the same nature, which we meet in other lands." No doubt that is why half a dozen editors have endeavoured to finish the story, and why all the attempts differ from one another! The date of the manuscript has been variously set down, as the XVIIIth or the XXth Dynasty. No matter which period we adopt, it is plain that the whole spirit breathed by the story is that of the XVIIIth Dynasty, when the Egyptian was reaching out in every direction to the strange lands about him, under the impulse of the new spirit which had sprung from the long War of Independence, and when the Land of Naharina, whence his armies brought back such marvellous stories, was to him a land of romance, where any kind of wonder might be expected to happen. It is in this magic land that the Story of the Doomed Prince moves.

The opening of the story reminds us how universal are the simple elements of fiction. A certain unnamed king of Egypt, who has had

no son, is gladdened by the birth of an heir to the throne. But the Hathors, our old friends the fairy godmothers in another and more ancient guise, predict a hard destiny for the child. "He will die," they say, "either by the crocodile, or by the serpent, or by the dog." To avert these dooms, the father keeps his son shut up in a secluded house on the edge of the desert; yet even so, his fate must be accomplished. One day he sees a man passing, with a dog running behind him, and insists that such a dog shall be got for him; and already you see his fate beginning to close around him. Grown to early manhood, he next insists on being allowed to go out to seek his fortune; and with his horse and his favourite dog he wanders to the Land of Naharina. The Prince of the land has a beautiful only daughter, who is kept secluded in a house of seventy windows, and is destined to be the bride of the man who can climb the great rock on which the house is perched. The prince joins himself to the band of young adventurers who are essaying the climb, succeeds, as one would expect, in scaling the rock to the window of the princess, is welcomed by her as her heart's desire, and is finally, though reluctantly (for he has not disclosed his identity), accepted by the prince as his daughter's husband.

After a time of happiness, he tells his wife of the triple fate which hangs over him; and at once, with a woman's sense of the practical, she advises him to reduce the chances of doom by one, "Why, then, do you not kill this dog, which runs always before you?" But the prince will

not consent to the sacrifice of his old companion, and the wife can only watch her husband all the more closely. At last the young pair return to Egypt, and take up their abode in a city not far from which dwelt a great crocodile, who was subject, save at certain seasons, to a mighty man. One day the prince lies down for his siesta, and falls asleep, while his wife watches over him. Then comes a great serpent to bite the prince; but his wife makes the reptile helpless by giving it milk to drink, till it cannot move, and then kills it with an axe. Wakening her husband, she says to him, "God hath given into thine hand one of thy fates; he will also give thee the others." Then the prince goes out with his dog, in pursuit of game. The dog chases the quarry down to the river, the prince follows it, and the crocodile lays hold of him, saying, "I am thy doom, following after thee." . . . And just at this critical point the exasperating papyrus breaks off, with a fragmentary sentence or two about the mighty man; and unless by some extraordinary piece of good luck a duplicate copy of the tale should turn up, we shall never know what happened to the prince. Probably, from what we know of the Egyptian attitude of mind towards destiny, the prince was delivered from the crocodile in some way or other, and in the end met his doom through his faithful dog; but the attempts which have been made to complete the story all leave one with the conviction that however it originally ended, it was not like that.

It was this story, which in itself is one of the most coherent and straightforward of Egyptian

romances, which suggested to Petrie his somewhat grimly humorous conception of "an historical dictionary of the elements of fiction: a kind of analysis that should be the death of much of the venerable stock-in-trade." Such an idea has a saturnine cast about it, which smacks a little of "breaking a butterfly upon a wheel"; but, indeed, the Doomed Prince would start us with a very fair contribution to that fatal lexicon. The only son who is destined to meet and wed the only daughter; the fairy godmothers whom we have met so often for good or evil; the secluded house, either in the desert or on the rock, with the familiar multiplicity of windows; the fate, vainly averted for awhile, coming at last apparently by the instrumentality of the hero's favourite animal, how many stories in all ages have turned upon just such, now rather rusty, hinges! More interesting, perhaps, is the revelation of the fact that the Egyptian mind, so often represented as set and unchanging in iron-hard conventions, is here represented as having undergone a complete change in its outlook upon the world and life. In the earlier Egyptian romance, as seen in such tales as those of the early magicians, or the adventure stories of the Middle Kingdom, fate has no place. Life is accepted simply as it comes, and cheerily and joyously. But the Egyptian of the Empire is beginning to be bowed under "the burden of the unintelligible world." He feels that things are not as he fain would have them; and that this is so is due to a mysterious power outside him, which has long since decreed all that comes to pass. Man may

strive as he will, but he cannot avert the doom assigned. "There is here, then, a new element, that of striving and unrest, quite foreign to the old Egyptian mind."

Less compact and coherent, and therefore to our minds less satisfactory as a piece of literary craftsmanship, is the most famous of all Egyptian stories, *The Tale of the Two Brothers*. With the opening part of the story, which describes the simple and toilsome life of the Egyptian fellah, as it was in the beginning, is now, and probably ever shall be, scarcely a fault can be found. Bata, the hard-working and virtuous younger brother who is so cruelly wronged, and comes through all his troubles to the throne of Pharaoh, is a masterly piece of portraiture—"one of the most beautiful character-drawings in the past." "Those who know Egypt," says a famous Egyptologist, "will know that Bata still lives there—several Bata I have known myself." But then on the top of this direct and skilful piece of character-drawing comes a mass of marvels, which to our minds are simply unintelligible, and detract from, instead of adding to, the quality of the story. Bata is lost in a welter of meaningless and fantastic wonders, and when he emerges he has suffered a sea-change into something, rich possibly, certainly strange, and is no longer the simple and straightforward youth of the opening of the story, but a mysterious and incomprehensible being, who is neither man nor god, but a something between, quite unconvincing to a modern mind. But we have to remember that the Egyptian mind judged

things in a very different fashion. Probably to Egyptian taste, the simplicity of the introduction was only tolerable as a foil to all the splendour of mystery and marvel which was to follow, and Bata, the mysterious semi-divine, semi-human, totally incomprehensible being, who comes at last through all his various guises—a seed, a bull, a tree—to the throne of the Pharaohs, is a far more genuine figure of romance than he could ever have been, had he remained on the natural plane on which he moves in the beginning of his history. It is a difference in the point of view, both temporal and racial, and there seems no need to imagine that the latter part of the tale is the work of a Ramesside editor, tacking on his jingle of tinsel marvels to the fine simplicity of the work of an earlier and simpler age. The love of marvels was in the blood of the race from start to finish, and is so still.

We owe the papyrus, as we have already seen, to Madame D'Orbiney, who bought it in Italy, got de Rougé to examine it for her (his results were published in 1852: "Notice sur un manuscrit égyptien en écriture hiéroglyphique, écrit sous le règne de Merienphtah"), and finally sold it to the Trustees of the British Museum in 1857. Interesting as the only text of the story which has become so famous, it has the added interest that it is one of the few papyri of which we can say that we know its original possessor, and that he was of royal blood, and sat at last, if only for a matter of five years, on the throne of Egypt. One of the curiosities of the manuscript is that it has a docket, written on the

verso of one of its leaves by a contemporary hand which reads :

Large loaves.	17
Loaves of second quality	50
Loaves of the temple	68

The meaning of this prosaic entry on the back of a sheet of an old romance is not obvious. Maspero has suggested that Seti II may himself have been the writer ; and if, as is likely, he was High-Priest of one of the great gods, as well as Crown Prince, we may have here a memorandum jotted down on the papyrus which he happened to be reading, to keep him in mind of some offering which was due at the temple over whose ritual he presided. The colophon is also noticeable. It runs : “ This book is finished in peace for the *ka* of the scribe and treasurer Qagabu, of the treasury of the Pharaoh (Life ! Health ! Strength !). . . . The scribe Anena, the owner of this book, has written it. Whoever speaks against this book, may the god Thoth smite him ! ” “ The owner of this book ” sounds like the earliest claim of copyright on record, and Maspero so interprets it. Many modern authors have no doubt shared the feelings which inspired Anena’s curse upon critics ; he had the advantage of having also courage enough to express them. Whether Anena was the first champion of author’s rights or no, his colophon is at least an interesting piece of human nature.

The story begins with the picture of the two brothers, Anpu and Bata, living together in peace

and happiness. Anpu, the elder, is married, and Bata lives in his house, and, as the writer puts it, "has the lot of a younger brother." In other words, he does all the hard work of the farm, and does it willingly and happily, for "he became an excellent worker who had not his match in the whole land; for the spirit of every god was in him." Unfortunately, the wife of his elder brother cast longing eyes upon the strong and active young man; and one day when the two brothers were in the field, and the younger had to come back to the house for some seed-corn, she made dishonourable suggestions to him, which he rejected as Joseph rejected the overtures of Potiphar's wife, and with results as disastrous to himself as was Joseph's virtue to him. His brother's wife resorted to the same device which Potiphar's wife adopted to wreak her revenge upon Joseph, and Anpu was furious to learn of what he believed to be the base treachery of his brother. Arming himself with a knife, he awaited Bata's return from the fields that he might slay him. But here Bata reaped the reward of his unfailing kindness even to the dumb creation; for as he neared the farm-yard, the cattle whom he was driving spoke to him warning him against his danger. Looking, he saw beneath the stable-door the feet of his elder brother, who was hidden there that he might stab him as he entered; and throwing down his burden, Bata fled for his life, pursued by the angry Anpu.

The great god Ra-Harakhte, however, came to the rescue of injured innocence, and interposed

between Bata and his pursuer a broad canal full of crocodiles. Anpu smote his hands together in impotent rage, to see himself thus baulked of his vengeance; but Bata shouted to him across the dark water, "Stay where you are till dawn. When the sun rises I will plead my cause with you before him, that truth may be made clear; thereafter I shall dwell with you no more, never shall I be in the place where you are; I am going to the Valley of the Acacia." When the dawn brought light enough for the two brothers to see one another, Bata revealed to Anpu the whole of the vile plot which had been foisted upon him, and reproached his elder brother with his readiness to believe evil of one who had never wronged him in anything. "Thou, to come treacherously behind me, knife in hand, to slay me by deceit, what an infamy!" The elder brother was at once overwhelmed by the justice of Bata's complaint, and would fain have crossed the water to embrace his brother; but the crocodiles forbade the attempt. And then Bata told his brother once more that he was going away to the Valley of the Acacia, and that strange and terrible things were going to happen to him.

I shall draw out my heart by art magic (said he), and shall place it on the top of the Acacia; and when my foe shall cut down the Acacia, and my heart falls to the ground, thou shalt come to seek it. Though the search cost thee seven years, do not be discouraged; but when once thou hast found my heart place it in a jug of fresh water; then I shall live again, and shall repay the evil which my foe has done me. Now thou shalt know when aught

happens to me, by these signs. The jug of beer which is brought to thee shall foam over, and when thou callest for a cup of wine, it shall be muddy. Verily thou shalt not delay, once these things have happened.

With these mysterious words, Bata seeks the Valley of the Acacia; and his elder brother goes home, and executes prompt justice on the wicked woman who had estranged him from his brother, and incidentally lost him the services of the unpaid servant who did all the work of the farm. "When he reached his house, he slew his wife, he cast her body to the dogs, and he remained mourning for his younger brother."

Meanwhile, strange things were happening to Bata, as he had anticipated; and from this point the story begins to lose itself in a maze of incomprehensible marvels, which to the Egyptian were doubtless the chief charm of the whole thing. Anybody could tell a plain story of farm life, and a bad woman causing trouble between two brothers; but when there had to be a bit of magic, black or white, in every paragraph, real genius was required. So probably what seems to us to spoil the whole story was its highest merit in the eyes of its original readers.

Bata, in the Valley of the Acacia, went on doing what he had done so well on his brother's land at home; he made a farm full of all good things, and built a house for himself. He put his heart on the top of the Acacia, and every evening he came home and lay down under the shadow of the tree which bore his life. All

might have gone well, if the gods had only refrained from meddling; but with the very best intentions they insisted on thrusting into Bata's tranquil life another specimen of the same cause of trouble from which he had already suffered so much. One day as he went abroad, he met the Divine Ennead—the Nine Gods who ordered the affairs of the whole Land of Egypt. All the Nine hailed him at once: "Ah! Bata, bull of the Nine Gods, are you still lonely after having left your home before the malice of the wife of your brother Anpu? Behold, the woman is slain, and you are avenged for all the evil which she did you." The hearts of the gods were very, very sore because of Bata's loneliness, and Ra-Harakhte said to Khnum (the Creator-God, who made men on his potter's wheel), "Lo, now, make a wife for Bata, in order that he may not remain in loneliness." So Khnum made him a companion to dwell with him; and she was more beautiful in all her limbs than any other woman in all the land, for the essence of all the gods was in her. But when the seven Hathors (the Fairy Godmothers again) came to see her, they said, "She will die the death of the sword!" Bata loved his beautiful, soulless wife with an exceeding love. As she had to dwell alone in the house while he went forth to his hunting, he warned her: "Go not out of doors, while I am away," he said, "lest the river seize thee; thou couldst not save thyself from him, being but a woman. As for me, my heart is placed on the top of the Acacia, and if anyone else should find it, I must fight him for my life." Thus, like Samson, he

told his beautiful Delilah the secret of his life, and with similar results.

Now it came to pass after many days, that Bata went forth to hunt, and his wife, of course, paid no heed to his warning, but went out and strolled beneath the Acacia. Then the river saw her, and chased her with his waves; and she fled before him, and entered the house again. The river cried to the Acacia, "Would that I could catch her!" and the faithless Acacia snatched a lock of her hair, and threw it into the stream. Then the river bore the lock of hair down to the land of Egypt, and laid it in the midst of the linen of Pharaoh (Life! Health! Strength!), which his laundrymen were washing. The sweet odour of the lock of hair was in all the linen of Pharaoh, and complaint was made to the laundrymen, saying, "There is a smell of sweet ointment in the linen of Pharaoh." Every day the same complaint was made, till at last the laundrymen were driven out of their senses. Then Pharaoh's chief laundryman came along to the washing-place himself, for he was very, very wroth about the complaints which were made to him every day. He stopped at the washing-place, just where the lock of hair floated among Pharaoh's linen; he bade one of his servants bring it to him, and when it was brought, lo, the smell of it was very sweet. Therefore he carried it to Pharaoh (Life! Health! Strength!). Pharaoh's wise men and magicians were called, and they said, "This lock of hair belongs to a daughter of Ra-Harakhte, who has in her the essence of all the gods. Since it has come to

thee as a tribute from a foreign land, do thou send forth messengers to all foreign lands to seek for this girl; and let the messenger whom thou dost send to the Valley of the Acacia be accompanied by many men that they may bring her back." Then said His Majesty, "Most excellent are the words which have been spoken to Us"; and the messengers went forth. Now after many days the men who had gone to distant lands returned to report to His Majesty; but those who had gone to the Valley of the Acacia came not back, for Bata had slain them all, save one whom he spared to make report to His Majesty. Then Pharaoh sent yet more men, with archers and charioteers, and with them he sent a woman who bore in her hand beautiful ornaments, such as a woman loves. The girl came back to Egypt with her, and the whole land rejoiced to see her beauty. His Majesty loved her exceedingly, and she was given the title of "Chief Favourite." Pharaoh asked her what should be done with regard to her husband, and she answered, "Cut down the Acacia, and there will be an end of him!" Foresters and archers were sent with their tools, to cut down the Acacia; they cut down the branch on which was the heart of Bata, and he fell dead in the selfsame hour.

Now when the earth brightened with the dawn on the day after the Acacia had been cut down, Anpu, the elder brother of Bata, entered his house and sat down to meat, having first washed his hands. They brought him a jug of beer, and as he took it, it foamed over. They gave him a cup of wine, and, lo, it was muddy.

Anpu seized his staff, and put on his sandals, and taking his cloak and his weapons, he set out for the Valley of the Acacia. There, in the house, he found his younger brother lying dead upon his bed ; and when he had mourned over him he went forth to seek the heart of his brother under the Acacia, in whose shade Bata was wont to rest. Three years he sought it in vain ; and when the fourth year came, he was seized with a great wish to return to Egypt, and said, " I will go to-morrow." Nevertheless he sought on that day as before, and as he came back at evening, lo, he found a seed, and carried it back with him to the house, and, behold, it was the heart of his brother. He brought a cup of fresh water, and threw the seed into it ; then he sat down beside his dead brother, as was his custom. Then when the night fell, and the heart had absorbed the water, Bata shivered through all his limbs ; his eyes opened, and stared fixedly at his brother, while his heart still lay in the cup. Anpu seized the cup of fresh water in which was the heart of his brother ; Bata drank, his heart returned to its place, and he was himself as he was wont to be.

The two brothers embraced one another, and talked together ; then Bata said to his elder brother :

Behold, I am going to become a great bull, which shall have all the good marks (by which the sacred Apis bull was distinguished), and no one will know his history. When the sun rises, seat thyself upon my back, and when we come to the place where my wife is I shall have something to say to her. As for thee, thou shalt guide

me to the place where He is (Pharaoh), all good things shall be done to thee, and they will load thee with silver and gold because thou hast brought me to Pharaoh ; for I shall be a great wonder, and all people in the whole land shall be glad because of me ; and thereafter thou shalt return to thy village.

So, when dawn came, Bata changed himself into the form which he had chosen. Anpu, his brother, sat upon his back at sunrise, and they came to the place where He was. Word was brought to His Majesty, who, when he beheld, was filled with exceeding joy, and made great offerings to the bull, saying : " This is a great wonder which has come to pass " ; and every one in the whole land rejoiced because of him. His elder brother was laden with gold and silver, and he went home and dwelt in his village. Many attendants and many offerings were given to the bull ; for Pharaoh loved him exceedingly, more than any man in the whole land.

Now, after many days, the bull entered one day into the holy place ; he stopped at the spot where the Chief Favourite stood, and he spake to her, saying, " Behold ! I am still alive." She made answer, " Thou, who art thou ? " Then said he, " Verily, I am Bata ! As for thee, well didst thou know, and wish in thy heart, that when thou causedst the Acacia to be cut down by Pharaoh, thou wast destroying me, so that I might no more live ; but, lo, I am alive all the same ; I am a bull." Then the Chief Favourite feared with an exceeding great fear, because of the words which her husband had

spoken unto her. So the bull went out from the holy place.

Now His Majesty came to pass a happy day with his favourite ; she sat at table with him and his heart was turned with exceeding love towards her. Then said she to His Majesty, " Swear to me by God, saying, ' Whatever thou shalt ask of me, I will hearken unto thee.' " He hearkened unto everything that she said ; and she spake thus, " Give me to eat of the liver of this bull, for he will never be any good to anybody." His Majesty was much afflicted at what she asked, and the heart of Pharaoh was exceeding heavy. Yet when the next dawn came, he caused proclaim a great feast of offerings to the bull, and one of the chief slaughterers of His Majesty was sent to slay the bull. Now when they had smitten him, while he was upon the shoulders of the sacrificers, he shook his neck, and caused two drops of blood to fall before the double door of His Majesty ; one of them fell on the one side of the great gate of Pharaoh, the other on the other side ; and they grew into two great Persea trees, each of which was of excellent beauty. Word was brought to His Majesty, saying, " Two great Persea trees have grown, as a great miracle for His Majesty, during the night, before the great gate of His Majesty." The whole land was glad because of them, and He made offerings to them.

Now after many days, it fell out one day that His Majesty adorned himself with the blue crown (probably the war-helmet, which is always represented as of a blue colour) ; he hung



XVI. PYRAMIDS OF LATER PHARAOHS OF THE OLD KINGDOM.



garlands of flowers about his neck, and mounting his chariot of electrum, he went forth from the royal palace to see the Perseas. The Chief Favourite also went forth behind Pharaoh, in a two-horse chariot; His Majesty sat down under one of the Persea trees, and the Favourite under the other. When she was seated, the Persea spake to his wife, saying, "Ah, Traitress! I am Bata, and I still live, though so evilly entreated of thee. Well didst thou know that to cause Pharaoh to cut down the Acacia was to destroy me; now, when I had become a bull, thou hast caused me to be slain."

Now after many days, there came a day when the Favourite was at the table of His Majesty; and He looked kindly upon her. Then said she to His Majesty, "Give me thine oath by God, saying, 'Whatever my love shall say to me, I will hearken unto her'"; and He hearkened to all that she said. Then said she, "Cause these two Persea trees to be cut down, that two beautiful chests may be made out of them." He hearkened to her words, and after a time His Majesty sent skilful foresters, who cut down the Perseas of Pharaoh, while the Great Royal Wife, the Favourite, stood there, looking on. Then a chip flew from the tree; it entered the mouth of the Favourite, and she knew that she had conceived. The chests were made, and He did all that his wife desired.

Now many days thereafter, she gave birth to a male child, and word was brought to His Majesty, saying, "There is born to thee a man-child." Pharaoh received him, and appointed

nurses and attendants for him ; and there was great rejoicing throughout the whole land. On the day of naming him, His Majesty, who had loved him exceedingly from the day of his birth, made a joyful day, and he was hailed as Royal Son of Kush. And after many days His Majesty made him Crown Prince of the whole land. And yet many days thereafter, when he had been Crown Prince of the whole land for many years, His Majesty flew up to Heaven. Then he (that is the Crown Prince, now Pharaoh, and Bata in his last incarnation) said, " Bring hither to me all the chief officers of His Majesty, that I may cause them to know all that has befallen me." His wife was brought before him, he judged her before them, and they ratified his judgment. His elder brother was brought to him, and he made him Crown Prince of the whole land. For twenty years he was King of Egypt, then he died, and his elder brother ascended the throne on the day of his burial.

To modern minds, the *Tale of the Two Brothers* is very inferior to that of the Doomed Prince, mainly because of the contrast between the simplicity and straightforwardness of the earlier story, and the complexity of the latter ; though, as we have seen, the chances are that to the Egyptian mind the more complex story was preferred just because of its complexity. There can be no question, however, as to the interest of the tale of Anpu and Bata in other respects. No piece of Egyptian fiction is fuller of illustrations of the life and customs of the ancient Egyptians ; and none has more links with the

romantic fiction of other lands. Almost as many contributions might be derived from it for the historical dictionary of fiction-motives, as from the Doomed Prince. Thus we have the Fairy Godmothers appearing again to predict the fate of Bata's beautiful wife, while the perfumed lock of hair, which causes such trouble to Pharaoh's chief laundryman, obviously belongs to the same order as the famous "slipper of vair" (ermine), of Cinderella, which, being transformed by natural carelessness into a "slipper of verre," became at last the most uncomfortable glass slipper which the heroine of our fairy tale chose, and no wonder, to leave behind her. The clouding of the wine, and the overflowing of the beer which warned Anpu of the disaster which had befallen Bata, is also a familiar omen in such tales. The extraordinary likeness of the earlier part of the tale to that of Joseph and Potiphar's wife needs no pointing out; but it must be remembered that the motive here is one that can be paralleled in the literature of other lands quite as remarkably, as, for example, in the Greek legend of Phædra and Hippolytus, and that as long as human nature remains the same, there is no need to suppose that one story is modelled upon another in any of the cases. Professor Petrie has traced in the notes to the story in his *Egyptian Tales*, Vol. II, the extraordinary faithfulness with which the details of Egyptian country life are depicted in the early part of the story, and his testimony is interesting as to the practically unchanging character of Egyptian life during a period of more than three thousand years.

Bata's wife, apart from the maze of meaningless marvels which gathers around her, is a peculiarly interesting creation—manifestly a soulless creature, a Lilith, or a Delilah—whose only emotions are those of ambition or avarice, and who will stick at nothing in her resolve to gratify these sordid passions. Her interviews with Pharaoh at table, when, His Majesty being no doubt in that favourable state of intoxication where he sees things double, she appears doubly beautiful to him, and he can deny her nothing, bring to mind at once the similar conditions under which Esther counterplotted Haman at the table of Ahasuerus, and Herodias and Salome tricked Herod into the murder of John the Baptist. The resemblance to the latter case extends even to the very phraseology, and when we hear the Evangelist saying, "The king was exceeding sorry; nevertheless for his oath's sake" . . . we seem to hear an echo of the old Egyptian writer's: "His Majesty was sore afflicted at what she said, and the heart of Pharaoh was exceeding heavy" . . . as he gives, in obedience to his foolish oath, his orders for the slaughter of the Apis.

The details given about the bull into which Bata is transformed are full of the essential colour of the land and its faith. The bull has "all the good marks." These were the marks by which the new Apis bull could be recognised, when his predecessor had died. They were as follows. The animal was black, bore a triangular white spot on his forehead, and on his back the figure of a vulture or an eagle with outspread wings; while

his tongue was marked with the figure of a scarabæus, and the hairs of his tail were double. One may conclude that such a paragon was not easily found, unless the priests of Ptah had access, with paint-pots, to the byre where he was bred. The joy with which the bull is received, and the rewards which are heaped upon Anpu for bringing him to the court, are exactly in accordance with ancient Egyptian custom. The period between the death of one Apis and the discovery of another was observed throughout the land as a period of mourning ; the recognition and enthroning of the new Apis was the signal for the cessation of the mourning, and the celebration of feasts all over the country. The entry of the bull into the holy place of the temple (Maspero translates it " into the harem ") is no less characteristic. In his quality as God incarnate, the Apis bull had access to the most sacred places, either of the temple or of the palace, and none would dare to hinder the ingress of His Divinity. One recalls the scorn with which St. Clement of Alexandria describes the god in the Holy of Holies of an Egyptian temple : " For no god is found therein, but a cat, or a crocodile, or a serpent sprung from the soil, or some such brute animal . . . and the Egyptian deity is revealed as a beast that rolls itself on a purple coverlet." The privileges of the sacred bull in an Indian bazaar are well known. The delight of the Pharaoh and of all his people at the two beautiful trees was not only the admiration of a race living in a land where fine trees are scarce, but a definitely religious sentiment.

The *Persea* was sacred to Osiris, and as such was sometimes planted in front of the funerary temples on the west bank of the Nile—notably at Hatshepsut's great temple at Der el-Bahri. Indeed, the worship of trees—a survival of the very ancient tree and pillar cult—continued in Egypt down to a late period of the history.

Such, then, are two of the most famous of the pieces of fiction which have come down to us by means of the papyri. Others of equal or almost equal importance and interest might have been given: the Magic Tales of the Westcar Papyrus, one of the oldest of such Egyptian tales, written perhaps in the XIIth Dynasty, and carrying us back to the period of the great pyramid-builders of the IVth Dynasty; the Story of Sinuhe, a tale of the XIIth Dynasty, from a papyrus at Berlin, and other less important sources, which reveals to us the way in which an Egyptian at that period naturally came to the front among the less cultured tribes of Palestine, even though he came among them as a homeless refugee; the charming little story of the Shipwrecked Sailor, from the Golenischeff Papyrus, original of such wild tales of travel and adventure as *Sindbad the Sailor*. But this chapter is already long enough, and Egyptian fiction need not be afraid to rest the defence of its reputation on the Tale of the Doomed Prince, and that of the Two Brothers.

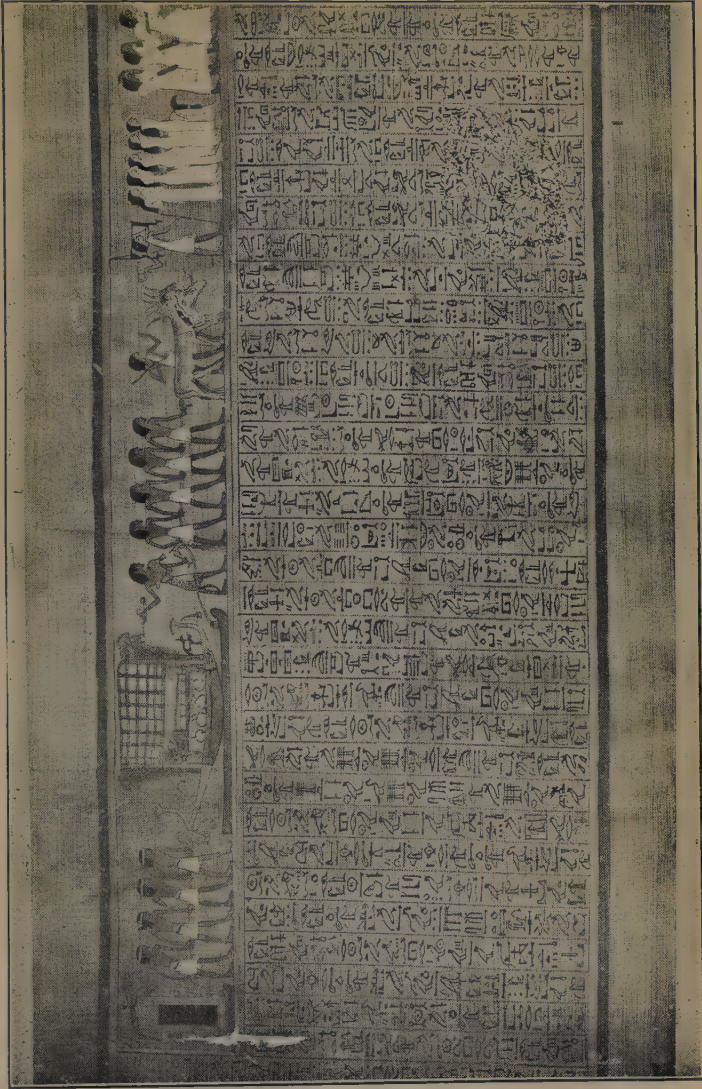
CHAPTER X

FUNERARY PAPYRI

THE extant mass of Egyptian literature which is devoted to religion is simply enormous, far exceeding in extent all the other branches of literature put together. "It may be said boldly," writes Steindorff, "that quite nine-tenths of the Egyptian writings preserved to us were devoted to some religious purpose, and that of the remaining tenth the bulk contains more or less information on religion." When, in turn, we come to analyse and sort out the contents of this abundant religious literature, we find that quite nine-tenths of it are devoted to the purely funerary aspect of religion, the rites requisite for the well-being of the dead man, the knowledge which it is necessary for him to possess if he is to pass safely through all the dangers of the Underworld, to be justified in the Great Assize of the Judgment Hall of the Twofold Truth, and finally to enter in peace into the Egyptian Elysian Fields, or whatever other form of the Egyptian state of blessedness he may covet; and that of this nine-tenths another nine-tenths is again devoted to the multiplied copies of a single book, of comparatively late

date, dealing in the main only with one particular aspect of Egyptian thought on death and the after-world—the so-called “Book of the Dead.” The other tenth of a tenth is divided between several other variants of the Book of the Dead, some of which are merely abbreviations of the larger book containing only such chapters as were deemed absolutely necessary for the welfare of the dead, while some again represent a somewhat different stratum of thought as to destiny in the other world. Such minor books of funerary literature are the Book of Knowing What is in the Underworld, the Book of the Gates, the Book of Breathings, and so forth.

The student of Egyptian religion, who imagines from the enormous bulk of the literature that he is going to be in an exceptionally favourable position to study the faith of a race which has left such ample record of its beliefs, is doomed to early disappointment. He speedily finds that the great bulk of what he reads is merely a repetition, wearisomely monotonous in its literalism, of what he has already read fifty times before ; and that the little which seems to have some novelty about it is absolutely incomprehensible to him, and, from the glosses upon it of the ancient priests, was evidently quite as incomprehensible to them. In fact the actual amount of solid information as to Egyptian religious beliefs and practices which can be derived from the extant mass of papyri is almost in inverse proportion to the bulk of it. That is not to say, however, that the Egyptian funerary papyri are devoid of interest and value. On the



XVII. FUNERAL PROCESSION (PAPYRUS OF ANI).

contrary, they have an interest and value of their own which is not lessened, but rather from some points of view increased, by the fact that to our minds so much of the material is absolutely unmeaning and childish, and so much unintelligible apparently not only to our minds, but also to the minds for which it was originally produced. The extraordinary spectacle of a great nation, whose capacity, in many respects, has never been surpassed, which was yet apparently content to leave its most vital and most enduringly cherished beliefs for many centuries in such an inextricable tangle, and never to feel the least need of straightening them out, is in itself a phenomenon of the very deepest interest.

Quite apart, however, from this curious revelation as to national characteristics, the funerary papyri themselves are a most interesting study from a number of different points of view. We, who are accustomed to a standard text for any work of importance, and most of all for any work of religious importance, and who look as a matter of course to see that text reproduced without additions or omissions, and with such care for accuracy that a misprint would strike us almost like an indecency, are staggered to find that the ancient Egyptian allowed the most extraordinary variations in the completeness and even in the accuracy of the sacred book to which he trusted for his eternal welfare in the world beyond death. You may get a copy of the Book of the Dead the number of whose chapters runs up to one hundred and fifty or more ; and another copy, supposed to serve its purpose just as well,

which has only a matter of half a dozen. Even among papyri which we should expect to have been executed with the extremest care and attention to all that could be necessary, because they were executed for scribes, who had professional knowledge of the material which was being prepared for their advantage, the most extraordinary variations are found. Thus the famous and beautiful Papyrus of Ani, in the British Museum, measures 78 feet in length by 1 foot 3 inches in breadth, and contains sixty-six chapters; the scarcely less beautiful Papyrus of Hunefer measures only 18 feet by 1 foot 6 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches, and contains only half a dozen chapters. The accuracy of the writing in the Papyrus of Ani is on the whole good, though there are omissions and blunders; on the other hand, while the text of Chapter I in Hunefer's Papyrus is so good that M. Naville used it as the standard text for that part of his *Todtenbuch*, the text of the seventeenth chapter is so corrupt that he was unable to use it even for purposes of comparison. Yet both these famous papyri were written for scribes, and probably in part by Ani and Hunefer themselves. Again, one of the British Museum Papyri of the Book of the Dead, second only to the Great Harris Papyrus in size, measures 123 feet in length by 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches in breadth, and contains 2666 lines of writing arranged in 172 columns; while, on the other hand, the Papyrus of Queen Netchemet measures only 13 feet 3 inches by 9 inches, and the papyri which were all that the poorer classes of the Theban community could afford, as Belzoni has told us, consisted only of

a few square inches of inscribed material, fastened to the breast of the mummy by a little "gum or asphaltum." Obviously, therefore, the Egyptian tolerated, in his sacred books, variations both of quantity and quality such as no modern people would dream of tolerating. Again we are faced with a national point of view quite different from any modern one.

The same thing holds good with regard to the actual work of the various scribes who were responsible for the papyri. They not only varied in their work to a degree which shows that there was really no standard text of the Book of the Dead, so that the question of how much or how little of it the dead man should carry with him in his papyrus was determined, not by a definite Canon of Scripture, which could not be departed from, still less, as was once suggested to the present writer by a lady whose enthusiasm for the mysticism of the least mystic of ancient races was greater than her knowledge of their characteristics, by the degree of initiation which the dead man had attained in sacred knowledge, but first, by the amount which his relatives could afford to pay the scribe whom they employed, and second, by the conscience, or want of conscience which the scribe brought to his task ; but they also were characterised by an inaccuracy, even in the best work, which we should regard as nothing short of scandalous. Longfellow's well-known verse—

In the elder days of Art,
Builders wrought with greatest care
Each minute and unseen part,
For the Gods see everywhere,

is not true of any ancient art whatsoever. There was scamped work in ancient days just as much as in modern, wherever the workman thought that his carelessness would not be noticed by his human overseer; he was always content to risk the anger of the Divine taskmaster. There is scamped work even in that treasure-house of wonderful craftsmanship, the Tomb of Tutankhamen; and the substituted coffin-lid there, patched even at that, shows how much regard workmen and overseers had for the all-seeing eye of God three thousand three hundred years ago. But Longfellow's kindly optimism is nowhere so far astray as when you compare it with the work of the scribes who attended to the most sacred of all Egyptian religious duties—the provision of the dead with the words of power which were vitally necessary for their welfare in the Underworld—nay, on which their hope of immortality might depend.

If you happened to be an Egyptian of the XVIIIth or XIXth Dynasty, you ran a better chance of having a decently correct copy of the Book of the Dead to take with you through the Underworld, to the extent, at all events, that your relatives could afford to pay; but even then the scribe, who knew that his work, once paid for and put in the coffin, was not likely to be seen by anyone again in this world (he did not foresee the modern scientific excavator), was extraordinarily careless in his work. Even in the beautiful Papyrus of Ani, there are duplicate chapters, inserted apparently simply to fill up space, while a large section of one of the most

important chapters has been omitted, seemingly because the artist who had illuminated the vignette had left too little space for the text; while many manifest errors occur in the actual writing, and show us the weary scribe caring little whether his client was imperilled in the other world by his carelessness or not, and anxious only to get somehow or other to the end of a dreary job.

If this was the case with the best and earliest funerary papyri, one may imagine how the unfortunates fared who happened to live and die in the later periods. One would imagine that the unlucky dead of the XXIst and subsequent dynasties had an uncommonly poor chance in the Underworld, if their salvation depended on the correctness of their guide-book to the Kingdom of Osiris. "The writers of the texts," says Sir E. A. W. Budge, "seem to be altogether reckless. Texts are copied beginning at the end instead of at the beginning, omissions of whole sections are frequent, texts that have proper vignettes are copied without the least regard to the correct vignettes, and what is intended to be a chapter frequently consists of nothing but a series of fragments of sentences copied without break merely to fill up the space which the artist had planned for the purpose. It seems as if the artist both painted the vignettes and wrote the text, and as if his sole aim was to produce a handsome, but not accurate, document."

On the other hand, some of the work of these ancient scribes, if we cannot give it the highest praise of all—that due to conscientious accuracy

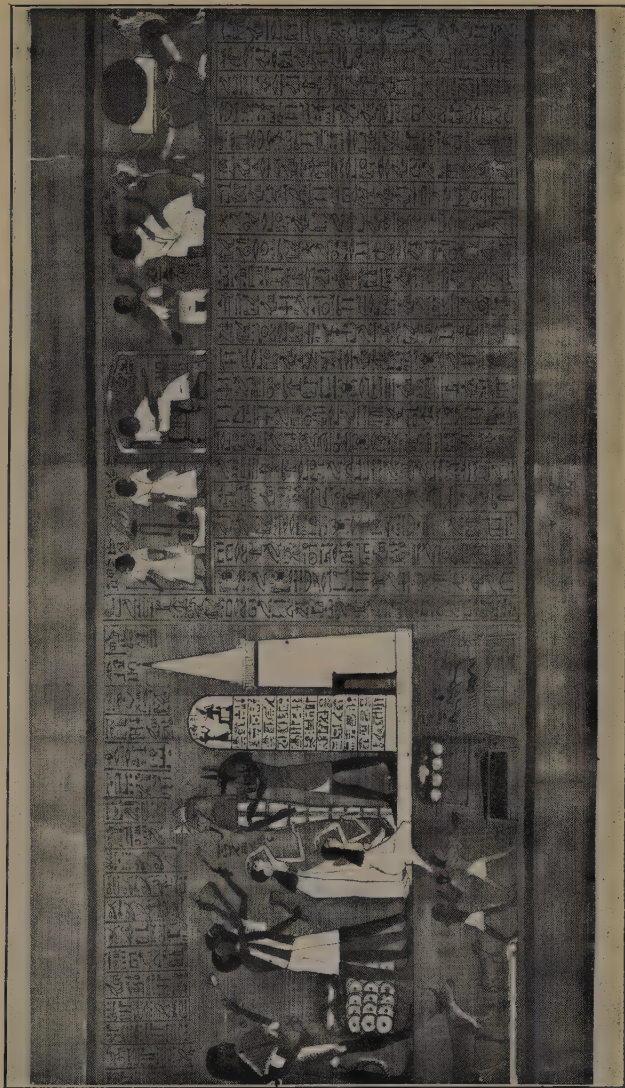
—is wonderfully beautiful, and from our point of view, remarkably instructive. The vignettes of some of the best of the early papyri are extraordinarily careful and skilful pieces of illumination, the freshness of whose colour, after so many centuries, speaks volumes for the quality of the materials used ; while the presentation of some of the important scenes in the after-life of the dead man, such as the passage through the Judgment Hall, with the weighing of the Heart in the presence of Thoth and Anubis, and the subsequent presentation of the justified man to Osiris, make clear to us, as no amount of words could do, the actual state of things which the Egyptian expected hereafter. The care and patience going to the preparation of a great papyrus, such as that of Ani, must have been very great ; and if the weary scribe did stumble now and again, one need not wonder ; he would have been something more or less than human if he had not made mistakes in the execution of his almost interminable task.

We must remember, however, that the Book of the Dead, interesting as it is, both in form and contents, is only a comparatively late version of the sacred literature which the Egyptian held to be necessary to the welfare of the dead in the world beyond ; and before we go on to discuss its contents, we must briefly consider what were the earlier versions of this literature, and in what respects they differed from the stereotyped form which was accepted from say, 1500 B.C. onwards.

The oldest form in which the funerary literature which afterwards took shape as the Book of

the Dead appears to us, is that of the Pyramid Texts, the most complete and authoritative body of material which we possess as to Egyptian religious beliefs in general, but specially valuable, of course, with regard to the primitive beliefs as to life in the hereafter. There are no inscriptions in any of the great pyramids of Gizeh, and Mariette long refused to believe that inscriptions would be found in any of the pyramids; but in 1880, just before his death in 1881, his workmen penetrated the pyramid of Pepi I, and subsequently that of Merenra, both of the VIth Dynasty, and found there, deeply cut in the walls of the interior chambers, and filled in with green paste, a number of religious inscriptions referring to the life of the dead king in the Egyptian heaven, and the method of his approach thereto. Later, inscriptions of a similar tenor were found in three other pyramids, so that altogether there are five sets of Pyramid Texts. The inscribed pyramids are those of Unas of the Vth Dynasty, Teta, Pepi I, Merenra, and Pepi II of the VIth Dynasty, and the inscriptions thus cover a period of from about 150 to 200 years. On the Berlin system the dates would run from about 2625 to 2475 B.C., while on Sir Flinders Petrie's system they would, of course, be much earlier, ranging from 4275 B.C., the end of the reign of Unas, to 4090 B.C., the end of the reign of Pepi II. Whichever dates we accept, these texts are by far the oldest body of religious material surviving to us from ancient Egypt, and are therefore of supreme importance for the study of Egyptian religion.

The amount of the material is very considerable. It is arranged in separate sections, to each of which is prefixed the words, "Utter the words," or "Recite the words." The pyramid of Unas, the oldest of the five, contains 228 such Utterances, and the other pyramids contain sufficient to make the number up to 714. In Sethe's great edition of them, they fill two quarto volumes with a thousand pages of text. Obviously the Book of the Dead, even in this, its earliest form, has assets. Archaic as much of the material is, it bears witness to a still more archaic period. The extant texts refer to certain chapters older than themselves, which are said to have been used on certain occasions recorded in the myths, such as "The Chapter of Those who Ascend," and "The Chapter of Those Who Raise Themselves Up." These chapters we do not now possess in an independent form, though they may have been incorporated in other texts. But even the existing material is of exceedingly primitive type, with many survivals from the period when the Egyptian was just emerging from barbarism. Thus in the earliest references to Osiris, there appear traces of a time when he was not regarded as a beneficent god, but on the contrary as a dangerous being, whose realm was to be dreaded. The probability is that, as Osiris appears in these earliest texts largely as a god of the Inundation, we have here a survival of the time when the earliest Egyptians had not learned to regulate the rise of their great river, and when the Inundation, instead of being a source of blessing, was a danger both to the



XVIII. CEREMONY OF OPENING THE MOUTH (PAPYRUS OF ANI).

property of the living, and to the peace of the dead in their tombs. Professor Breasted divides the texts into the following classes : 1. Funerary Ritual, and Ritual of mortuary offerings at the tomb ; 2. Magical charms ; 3. Very ancient Ritual of worship ; 4. Ancient religious hymns ; 5. Fragments of old myths ; 6. Prayers and petitions on behalf of the dead king ; but generally speaking, the object of the whole gathering of texts is to ensure the felicity of the dead king in the hereafter, just as the object of the Book of the Dead was to secure that of the person who carried with him to the grave a copy of the sacred volume. At this stage, apparently, the conception of immortality as a thing for all who fulfilled the requisite conditions has not arisen, and the life eternal is a thing reserved for Pharaoh alone ; but on this point our information is too scanty to enable us to be dogmatic. We can only say that so far as the extant texts go, it is only for the king that immortality is contemplated.

The conception of immortality given by the texts is crude in the extreme. Its dominant note is "insistent, even passionate, protest against death." The Pyramid Texts "may be said to be the revolt against the great darkness and silence from which none returns." Death is constantly and steadfastly denied. "King Teta has not died the death, he has become ■ glorious one in the horizon." "Ho ! King Unas ! Thou didst not depart dead, thou didst depart living." The passages of similar import are innumerable, as though the ancient believer

hoped that assertion might in the end triumph over the grim and too evident fact. The living king who has passed through death is pictured as flying up to heaven as a bird, or climbing up by the celestial ladder, or as floating across the waters which intervened between him and the abode of the blessed upon the primitive reed-float which has been in use in Egypt for countless centuries, and is still used. He is provided with magic words of power to enable him to pass the challenge of all the warders of the gates on the celestial way, or to overcome all the enemies who lie in wait for him ; and at last, all his dangers over, the last challenging voice dies into silence behind him, and Pharaoh enters triumphantly upon his new realm of the sky. His advent is a cause for terror among all the inhabitants of heaven :

Clouds darken the sky,
The stars rain down,
The Bows stagger,
The bones of the Hell-hounds tremble,
The Porters are silent,
When they see King Unas dawning as a soul.

And the terror of all is not without cause, having regard to the occupations in which the new immortal is supposed to find his delight and the sustenance of his life.

King Unas is one who eats men and lives on gods,
Lord of messengers, who dispatches his messages ;
It is " Grasper-of-Forelocks," living in Kehew,
Who binds them for King Unas.
It is the serpent " Splendid-Head "
Who watches for them and repels them for him.
It is " He-who-is-upon-the-Willows "
Who lassoes them for him.

It is " Punisher-of-all-Evildoers "
 Who stabs them for King Unas.
 He takes out for him their entrails.
 Shesmu cuts them up for King Unas
 And cooks for him a portion of them
 In his evening kettles.
 King Unas is he who eats their charms,
 And devours their glorious ones.
 Their great ones are for his morning portion,
 Their middle-sized ones are for his evening portion,
 Their little ones are for his night portion.
 Their old men and their old women are for his incense-
 burning.
 It is the " Great-Ones-North-of-the-Sky "
 Who set for him the fire to the kettles containing them,
 With the legs of their oldest ones as fuel.

Certainly there is an element of wild and fantastic power in this picture of the dead king lassoing the gods and devouring them, so that their power and magic enter into his being,

He has taken the hearts of the gods,
 He has eaten the Red,
 He has swallowed the Green.
 Their charms are in his belly,
 He has swallowed the knowledge of every god.
 The lifetime of King Unas is eternity ;

but it would be difficult for King Unas and the priests who equipped him with this provision against the dangers of the Underworld to claim higher intellectual rank for their faith than that of the modern cannibal who devours the heart of his vanquished enemy in the belief that he thus becomes the possessor of the strength of his victim. The Pyramid Texts, in short, give us, alongside the picture of high civilisation and

culture which we derive from the other relics of the Vth and VIth Dynasties, the picture of a race, which, in some aspects of its mental and spiritual being, was only beginning to climb out of the gross savagery of primitive times ; and from that point of view their importance can scarcely be overrated. Apparently the imagination of the priesthood in the earliest times could rise no higher in its attempts to conceive the joys of heaven than an abundance of the same gross satisfactions of the senses which had characterised the earthly life of an absolute king. "Thy thousands of bread ! Thy thousands of beer ! Thy thousands of incense, which came forth from the palace-hall ! Thy thousands of everything pleasant ! Thy thousands of cattle ! Thy thousands of everything thou eatest, on which thy desire is set !" The dead king is never to know hunger, and, if other supplies fail, there is always the resource of the Tree of Life which grows in the mysterious isle in the midst of the Field of Offerings, in search of which he sets out in company with the Morning Star, who is a gorgeous green falcon, a Solar Horus of the Underworld ; but however romantic may be the pictures, the essence of the business is always in the end gross physical comfort.

The next phase of the funerary literature which culminates in the great papyri of the Book of the Dead occurs in the time of the Middle Kingdom. With the rise of the great feudal barons of this period, there came the desire on the part of these big local magnates to claim for themselves the immortality which hitherto had

only been the portion of Pharaoh himself ; and from them the appropriation of the funerary texts spread to the middle and official class of the kingdom. This period of transition, the necessary step to the time when immortality should be the portion of everybody who had fulfilled the necessary conditions, is represented for us by the set of funerary texts which are known as the Coffin Texts, from the fact that they are found written in ink on the inner surfaces of the heavy cedar coffins in which the dead of the middle and upper classes of this age are interred. A certain proportion of this new form of funerary literature is derived directly from the Pyramid Texts, with only such adaptations as are necessary to fit the old material to its new and less exalted uses.

Apparently the process by which the Coffin Texts were produced, or rather by which they were preserved, was something like this. The priesthood furnished the local coffin-makers with copies of the funerary literature which was deemed necessary for the welfare of the dead, under this new hope of immortality for all which had dawned upon the Egyptian mind. These texts were then written by scribes in the undertaker's employ on the planed cedar planks which were destined to be made up into coffins ; and, when a coffin was needed, all that was necessary was to fasten together the planks, which already bore the words of power. The business was carried out, as might have been expected under these conditions, with the most shocking and scandalous carelessness. The scribe's one desire

and aim was to cover so many square feet of planking with writing as quickly as possible. He had not the least interest in the eternal welfare of the people for whom the planks would eventually be made into coffins, and whether they passed the dangers of the Judgement or the road to heaven by the help of his accuracy, or perished by reason of his carelessness, was matter of utter indifference to him. The inaccuracy of the papyri of a later age, bad as it is, pales before that of this Coffin Text business, where the scribe thought nothing of writing the same chapter twice or three times over in the same coffin, to the exclusion, of course, of other necessary texts, and where in one instance a single chapter is repeated five times.

As for the substance of the Coffin Texts, this is derived in the main from two sources. About half of the material is directly taken over from the Róyal Pyramid Texts; but the remainder introduces us to a collection of funerary literature more adapted to the humbler estate of the classes who were now claiming a share in the blessings of immortality, and it is this portion which is more the direct forerunner of the later Book of the Dead. Thus there are chapters which secure to the ordinary citizen all the comforts and joys which have been his portion in the present life—a chapter concerning “Building a House for a man in the Nether-world, digging a pool, and planting fruit-trees,” and another giving him security of tenure in the house when built—the “Chapter of a man’s being in his House,” while friendship and society

were secured for him by the chapter, "Sealing of a decree concerning the Household, to give the Household to a man in the Nether-world," an object which is doubly assured by another chapter whose title is "The Uniting of the Household of a Man with Him in the Nether-world," and which promises union with "the household, father, mother, children, friends, connections, wives, concubines, slaves, servants, everything belonging to a man, in the Nether-world." This might seem to be sufficiently comprehensive; but there were other and more immediately pressing needs still, and these also were provided for. Thus the chapter of "Causing that X raise himself upon His Right Side," turning over from the left-side position in which the dead at this time are laid, indicates that he is expected to prepare himself for eating; and his requirements in this respect are provided for by the "Chapter of Eating Bread in the Nether-world," or the "Chapter of Eating of Bread on the Table of Ra, Giving of Plenty in Heliopolis."

Along with this attention to the material needs of the dead, there goes, however, a distinctly deeper sense of moral responsibility than is found in the Pyramid Texts. The weighing of the deeds of the dead man in the balances of eternal justice now makes a frequent appearance, which leads up to the stereotyped presentation of this doctrine which we get in the text and vignettes of the Book of the Dead. Sometimes the balances are referred to as those of Ra, the Sun-god, and this belongs, we may presume, to the earliest stratum of such belief,

for originally the Judgement-hall, in which even Osiris had to appear for his justification, was that of Ra. Later, with the gradual Osirianisation of all the doctrines of the after-life which characterises the development of Egyptian religion, the Judgement-hall becomes that of Osiris. The growth of the influence of the great god of the Resurrection is plainly to be traced in the Coffin Texts as compared with the Pyramid Texts.

We have already seen in the Pyramid Texts the fondness of the Egyptian for magic; and the dead king, by the eating of the gods, becomes the supreme magician, with "the magic of all the gods in his belly." In the Coffin Texts, the element of magic has grown enormously. Already the Nether-world is contemplated as a place full of dangers and ordeals, the only hope of passing through which lies in the possession by the deceased of the proper charms and words of power. We have a chapter "Of Becoming a Magician," and also a chapter to secure that magical power, once attained, should not be lost again, "The Attachment of a Charm, so that the Magical Power of a Man may not be taken away from Him in the Nether-world." Besides, there are chapters enabling a man to transform himself into any shape which he might choose, chapters to repulse the deadly serpents which beset the path to heaven, and to enable the pilgrim to pass through the fire without being burned, while he was saved from the dreadful doom of having to walk head-downward by the possession of the "Chapter of Not Walking Head Downward."



PLATE XIX.—*Left:* Osiris-Seker enshrined.
Centre: The Goddess Hathor as a Hippopotamus.
Right: The Hathor Cow emerging from the Mountain of the West.
Vignette from Papyrus of Ani.
(By kind permission of the British Museum.)



PLATE XX.

The Occupations of Ani in the Elysian Fields.

Vignette from Papyrus of Ani.

(By kind permission of the British Museum).

The still more ghastly possibility that a man might lose his head altogether (a possible relic of ancient African head-hunting?) is guarded against by the "Chapter of Preventing that the Head of a Man be taken away from Him."

All this (and it constitutes no small portion of the Coffin Texts, as of the Book of the Dead) is somewhat melancholy reading, and gives a somewhat poor idea of Egyptian religious thought. The extraordinary thing is that side by side with the gradual development of the moral sense, which results in the fully formed doctrine of the Judgement after death in the Book of the Dead, and the remarkably full view of moral responsibilities which is found in the ridiculously misnamed Negative Confession, there should go the equally steady growth of the belief in the power of magic to enable its possessor to evade quite comfortably the requirements of that moral code which he had gradually been learning to consider binding on himself. The inconsistency, which we shall meet full-blown in the Book of the Dead, is a shocking one, and one which would seem to be absolutely destructive of any true moral sense; it is, however, one which was not confined to the Egyptian religion, but has manifested itself wherever there has been a special priestly class whose interest it is to keep the power of the keys of salvation in its own hands.

Just as between the time of the Old Kingdom and that of the Middle Kingdom we know nothing of the funerary texts, so between the end of the Middle Kingdom, with its Coffin Texts,

and the rise of the New Empire, with its Book of the Dead, we know nothing of the development which was taking place in Egyptian ideas with regard to the life hereafter. Nothing, that is to say, from external evidence ; the actual course of the development is pretty plain from the internal evidence of the Book of the Dead itself as we have it. The first thing that appears is the continuous democratisation of the belief in immortality. When your funerary literature involves the building of a pyramid on whose chamber walls it is to be inscribed, it is manifest that immortality is a privilege reserved for Pharaoh alone ; when it is written on cedar coffins, the conception has been popularised so far that it is open to any man of means to claim a share in the blessings of the Egyptian Heaven. But cedar coffins were still a costly business, and the restriction of the texts to them meant the shutting out of the vast majority of Egyptians from the joys of heaven. Consequently the New Empire makes the logical advance which popularised immortality, so to speak, and substituted the papyrus roll for the other methods of securing the well-being of the dead. Here was a method essentially democratic, because it shut out nobody ; and also elastic, because it adapted itself to the wants and means of all classes, and could be adjusted to the purse of the prince at one end of the scale, or to that of the pauper at the other. A roll of papyrus might become almost as expensive a thing as you liked, with a length of anything from twenty to a hundred and twenty feet or more, with writing of the most

exquisite fineness, and rubrics carefully inserted in red ink, while almost every section was brilliant with the brightest colours that the scribe's palette could furnish, and in some instances flashed with gold; on the other hand it might be a scrap of a few inches square, with a few sentences of the absolutely essential charms rudely scrawled upon it, fastened to the breast of the dead man's shroud by a dab of bitumen. The extension of the franchise of immortality had at last found its fitting instrument, and could scarcely go further.

We have already seen the chief characteristics of the papyri which represent the funerary literature of the New Empire; it remains now to consider their contents. First of all, let us remember that while the name "Book of the Dead" is a convenient convention to use in the description of the contents of these papyri, there really never was such a thing as a Book of the Dead. No Egyptian would have understood you if you had spoken to him of such a thing.

As we have seen, there was no standard text of the funerary literature at all. There were collections, varying in length and composition, of all sorts of spells which were held to be efficacious in securing the interests of the dead in the Underworld; but what particular collection you purchased for your own benefit, or what selection from any collection or collections, depended either on your own taste, or perhaps rather on the stock of the scribe to whom you went for the supply of your needs—

perhaps most of all on the length of your purse, and the amount you were prepared to spend. As a matter of fact, no two rolls have ever been found containing the same collection of texts, and the range of variation is extreme. If you had asked a Theban for "The Chapters of Coming Forth by Day," or "The Spells for Ascending by Day," he would have understood you perfectly, for this name was applied by the Thebans to one of their favourite sets of spells; but elsewhere than in Thebes a different selection would be in use, and it would be called by a different name, if by any name at all. Even this "Theban Recension," as it is sometimes called, shows endless variation in its different copies. It is quite impossible, therefore, to establish, so to speak, a Canon of the Book of the Dead; and all that we can do is to indicate some of its most important contents.

In the first place, and in the more important papyri, we have a certain number of Hymns to the Gods—specially to Ra and Osiris. The character of these may be judged by the following brief quotations, one from the Papyrus of Qenna, "the Merchant," the other from the Papyrus of Ani.

I. A Hymn of Praise to Ra when He riseth in the Eastern Part of Heaven. Behold Osiris, Qenna, the Merchant who saith: "Homage to thee, O Ra, when thou risest, and to thee, O Temu, in thy risings of beauty. Thou risest, thou risest, thou shinest, thou shinest, at dawn of day. Thou art crowned King of the Gods, and the goddess Shuti performeth an act of homage unto thee. The company of the Gods praise thee from the

places of sunrise and sunset. Thou passest over the height of heaven, and thy heart is filled with gladness. The *Sektet* boat draweth on, and Ra advanceth in the *Atet* boat with fair winds. Ra rejoiceth, Ra rejoiceth. Thy father is Nu, thy mother is Nut, O Thou who art crowned as Ra-Heru-khuti, thy divine boat advanceth in peace. Thine enemy hath been given over to the flame, and he hath fallen ; his head hath been cut off. The heart of the Lady of Life (Isis) is glad because the foe of her lord hath fallen headlong. The mariners of Ra have content of heart and Annu (Heliopolis) exulteth."

II. A Hymn to Osiris Unnefer : "Glory be to Osiris Unnefer, the great god within Abydos, king of eternity, lord of the everlasting, who passeth through millions of years in his existence. Eldest son of the womb of Nut, engendered by Seb the Erpat, lord of the crowns of the North and South, lord of the lofty white crown : as prince of gods and of men he hath received the crook and the whip, and the dignity of his divine fathers. Let thy heart, which is in the mountain of Amentet be content, for thy son Horus is established upon thy throne. Thou art crowned lord of Tattu (Busiris) and ruler in Abtu (Abydos). Through thee the world waxeth green in triumph before the might of Neb-er-tcher. He leadeth in his train that which is, and that which is not yet, in his name of Ta-her-stanef ; he toweth along the earth in his name of Seker ; he is exceeding mighty and most terrible in his name Osiris ; he endureth for ever and for ever in his name of Unnefer.

Apart from the hymns, which, as can be seen from these extracts, have nothing very lofty or inspiring in them, and from the Judgement Scene, the whole contents of the book are neither more nor less than a collection of spells, differing not one whit in character or quality from the

spells which are found in other vulgar collections of spells against disease and dangers of all common sorts. A few of the more interesting of these charms may be quoted in illustration of the true character of a book which is often ludicrously looked upon as a wonderful storehouse of mystic truth. Here is one of the most familiar of them all, Chapter VI, from the papyrus of Nebseni, in the British Museum :

The Chapter of Making the Shabti Figure to do Work for a Man in the Underworld.—The scribe Nebseni, the draughtsman in the Temples of the North and South, the man highly venerated in the Temple of Ptah, saith : “ O thou *shabti* figure of the scribe Nebseni, the son of the scribe Thena, justified, and of the lady of the house Mutrestha, justified, if I be called, or if I be adjudged to do any work whatsoever of the labours which are to be done in the Underworld . . . let the judgement fall upon thee instead of upon me always, in the matter of sowing the fields, of filling the water-courses with water, and of bringing the sands of this east to the west.”

The *shabti* figure answereth, “ Verily I am here, and will come whithersoever thou biddest me.”

This, of course, is the familiar incantation so continually inscribed upon the Ushabti figures themselves, sometimes with the addition on the part of a cautious man, “ Obey only him who made thee ; do not obey his enemy.” It is comparatively decent and sober sense compared with the wild and fantastic nonsense of which some of the spells are composed. We take, for instance, ■ most important chapter, No. XXXII,

The Chapter of Beating Back the Crocodile which Cometh to Carry away the Magical Words from the Khu in the Underworld.

Osiris, Auf-ankh, justified, saith : " The Mighty One fell down upon the place where he is or (as others say), upon his belly ; but the company of the gods caught him, and set him up again. My soul cometh and it speaketh with its father, and the Mighty One delivereth it from these eight crocodiles. I know them by their names, and what they live upon, and I am he that hath delivered his father from them.

" Get thee back, O crocodile that dwellest in the West, thou that livest upon the stars that never rest ; for that which is an abomination unto thee is in my belly. O thou that hast eaten the forehead of Osiris, I am Set.

" Get thee back, O crocodile that dwellest in the East, the serpent-fiend Nauu is in my belly, and I will give him unto thee ; let not thy flame be against me.

" Get thee back, O crocodile that dwellest in the South, who feedest upon filth, and waste and dirt, for that which is an abomination unto thee is in my belly ; shall not the flame be on thy hand ? I am Sept.

" Get thee back, O crocodile that dwellest in the North, for the goddess Serqet is in my belly, and I have not yet brought her forth. I am Uatch-Maati."

And so on through eight incantations, each exactly as full of sense as those which have been quoted. The spell ends thus :

The things which are created are in the hollow of my hand, and those which have not yet come into being are in my body. I am clothed and wholly provided with thy magical words, O Ra, the which are in heaven above me, and in the earth beneath me. . . . My face is open, my heart is upon its seat, and the crown with the serpent is

upon me day by day. I am Ra, who is his own protector, and nothing shall ever cast me to the ground.

The chapter immediately following this precious farrago of nonsense is a well-known one, and has at least one great merit—it is very short. In other respects it stands on the same intellectual and spiritual level as its predecessor—perhaps even a little lower. I quote it here from the Papyrus of Nu in the British Museum :

The Chapter of Repulsing Serpents.—Nu, the Overseer of the Palace, the Chancellor-in-Chief, justified, saith : “ Hail, thou serpent Rerek, advance not hither. Behold Seb and Shu. Stand still now, and thou shalt eat the rat which is an abominable thing unto Ra, and thou shalt crunch the bones of a rotten cat.”

The same merit of brevity may be conceded to the XLIIIrd chapter :

The Chapter of Not Letting the Head of a Man be Cut off from Him in the Underworld.—Osiris Ani, justified, saith : “ I am the great One, son of the Great One ; I am Fire, the son of Fire, to whom was given his head after it had been cut off. The head of Osiris was not taken away from him, let not the head of Osiris Ani be taken away from him. I have knit myself together ; I have made myself whole and complete ; I have renewed my youth ; I am Osiris, the lord of Eternity.”

There are several chapters which provide spells against the much-dreaded danger of being obliged to eat filth in the Underworld, through the neglect of one's relatives to provide the necessary supplies of food and drink. The

shortest of them will probably be found quite long enough for modern tastes :

The Overseer of the Palace, Nu, justified, saith :
 " That which is an abomination unto me, that which is an abomination unto me, let me not eat. That which is an abomination unto me, that which is an abomination unto me is filth. Let me not be compelled to eat it in the absence of the sepulchral cakes and provisions which should be offered unto me. Let me not be destroyed thereby ; let me not be compelled to take it into my hands ; and let me not be compelled to walk thereon in my sandals."

One of the most famous and most highly recovered chapters in the whole collection is the well-known LXIVth, which, according to tradition, was discovered in a quasi-miraculous manner, which is related in several different ways, and was always regarded as being one of the most ancient portions of the book. It also had the merit of being a kind of compendium of useful knowledge with regard to the Underworld, so that if a man knew it, he had a fair chance even in the absence of the other spells. A little of it will probably go a long way with the reader. "*Chapter of Knowing the 'Chapters of the Coming Forth by Day in a Single Chapter,'*" begins as follows :

I am Yesterday and To-morrow ; and I have the power to be born a second time. I am the divine hidden Soul, who createth the gods, and who giveth sepulchral meals to the divine hidden beings in the Tuat, in Amenti, and in Heaven. I am the rudder of the east, the possessor of two divine faces wherein his beams are seen. I

am the lord of those who are raised up, the lord who cometh forth out of the darkness. Hail ye two divine hawks who are perched upon your resting-places, and who hearken unto the things which are said by him, the thigh of the sacrifice is tied to the neck, and the buttocks are laid upon the head of Amentet. May the Ur-urti goddesses (Isis and Nephthys) grant such gifts unto me when my tears start from me as I look on. 'I know the abysses' is thy name. I work for you, O ye *Khus*, who are in number four millions, six hundred and one thousand, and two hundred, and they are in height twelve cubits. Ye travel on joining the hands, each to each; but the sixth hour, which is at the head of the Tuat, is the hour of the overthrow of the Fiend." . . .

The chapter closes as sensibly as it began :

My forms are the forms of the god Khepera, the hair of the earth of Tem, the hair of the earth of Tem. I have entered in as a man of no understanding, and I shall come forth in the form of a strong *Khu*, and I shall look upon my form, which shall be that of men and women, for ever and ever.

"If this chapter," says the rubric at the close, "be known by the deceased, he shall be victorious both upon earth and in the Underworld, and he shall perform every act of a living human being. Now it is a great protection which hath been given by the god."

Probably the reader, when he remembers that only about a third of this chapter of high-sounding nonsense has been quoted, will conclude that the patient Egyptian who committed it to memory had fairly earned any protection which it could give. And this is the kind of drivel into which some present-day enthusiasts, who seem

to believe that the more nonsensical a passage may be, the more surely does it contain the highest wisdom, would fain read a system of mystic doctrine which would have astonished no one so much as the priests, the professed interpreters of it all, who, as their pathetically helpless glosses show, did not understand it in the least themselves, but used the incomprehensible jumble, all the more terrible to the lay mind because incomprehensible, as a lever wherewith to acquire and maintain both wealth and influence, after the usual manner of priesthoods in all ages. "Unintelligibility," remarks Professor Peet, speaking of the Book of the Dead, "appeared to detract in no wise from the magical value" of the texts. The ancient Egyptians, it would seem, are not alone in this opinion.

We should, however, be doing injustice to the moral sense of a great nation if we simply discarded the Book of the Dead as valueless because nine-tenths of its contents are made up of the kind of trash to which we have been listening. From his earliest period, there are hints, obscure enough at first, no doubt, but gradually growing clearer and assuming more definite shape as time goes on, that the Egyptian believed in moral responsibility, and held that in the life after death each man had to answer for "the deeds done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." This conviction reaches its full expression, and its definite shape, in Chapter CXXV of the Book of the Dead, the most famous document, from a religious point of view, which has come down

to us from antiquity. The chapter is accompanied, in the great papyri, by a series of vignettes of a very elaborate and interesting character, of which the most important is that of the Psychostasia, or weighing of the soul (or heart, as the Egyptians, in common with other ancient peoples, expressed it). I describe the vignette from the great papyrus of Ani, perhaps the most complete, as it is also the most beautifully executed, of such illuminations. Ani stands in the great Hall of Judgement, with his wife Tutu, bearing a sistrum, behind him. Both are bowing in an attitude of adoration. In front of them, occupying the centre of the vignette, stands the great balance of judgement, in one scale of which is the vessel containing the heart of Ani, while in the other is the feather which symbolises Truth or Righteousness. The jackal-headed god Anubis, the Guide of the Dead, tests the tongue of the balance, while the god Shai, Destiny, stands beneath the beam, and the goddesses Renenet, and Meskhenit, Good Fortune and Birth, stand between the scale in which is the heart and Ani himself. At the end of the beam hovers the soul of Ani in the usual shape of a human-headed bird. Beyond the other end of the beam of the balance stands the god Thoth, the recorder, writing down the result of the weighing; and behind him is the composite monster Ammit, with the head of a crocodile, the body of a lion, and the hind-quarters of a hippopotamus, ready to devour the heart, and so to destroy Ani's hope of immortality, if the result of the weighing should prove unfavourable.

Above, forming a kind of frieze, which, in the Egyptian's naïve attempt at a convention for perspective, means in the background, sit twelve gods, as witnesses of the weighing, and as assessors who shall receive the Confession of the dead man. In other papyri the assessor gods vary in number, and sometimes their places are taken by the forty-two genii to whom the Confession had to be made. The text on the left hand of the vignette contains Ani's appeal to his heart not to shame him in the Judgement, and that on the right the sentence of acquittal. We shall see shortly the bearing of some of these details on the moral quality of the Judgement.

The text of the chapter consists of three parts. First, the candidate for immortality recites a brief formula of invocation, which varies considerably in different papyri, but of which one of the shortest and most sensible versions is as follows :

Praise be to thee, thou great god, thou lord of the Two Truths ! I have come to thee, O my lord, that I may behold thy beauty. I know thee, and I know the names of the forty-two gods who are with thee in the Hall of the Two Truths, who live on the evil-doers, and who drink their blood each day of the reckoning before Unnefer (Osiris). I come to thee, and bring to thee truth, and chase away wrong-doing.

Following upon this invocation, he recites a shorter form of repudiation of sins, which is apparently of more ancient origin than the longer and better-known form which follows it. The shorter form varies in different papyri ; but the

variations are not of great importance. Here is the version from the Papyrus of Nu, in the British Museum :

I have not done evil to mankind. I have not oppressed the members of my family. I have not wrought evil in the place of right and truth. I have had no knowledge of worthless men. I have not wrought evil. I have not set foremost in the considerations of each day that excessive labour should be performed for me. I have not brought forward my name for exaltation to honours. I have not ill-treated servants. I have not thought scorn of God. I have not defrauded the oppressed of his property. I have not done that which is an abomination unto the gods. I have not caused harm to be done to the servant by his master. I have not caused pain. I have made no one to suffer hunger. I have made no one to weep. I have done no murder. I have not given the order for murder to be done for me. I have not inflicted pain upon mankind. I have not defrauded the temples of their offerings. I have not purloined the cakes of the gods. I have not carried off the cakes offered to the *khus* (illuminated souls). I have not committed fornication. I have not polluted myself, or diminished from the bushel. I have neither added to nor filched away land. I have not encroached upon the fields of others. I have not added to the weights of the scales. I have not misread the pointer of the scales. I have not carried away the milk from the mouths of children. I have not driven away the cattle which were upon their pastures. I have not snared the feathered fowl of the preserves of the gods. I have not caught fish with fish of their kind. I have not turned back water in its time. I have not cut a cutting in a canal of running water. I have not extinguished a fire when it should burn. I have not violated the times of the chosen meat-offerings. I have not driven off the cattle from the property of the gods.

I have not repulsed God in his manifestations. I am pure. I am pure.

Here is a very simple and comparatively primitive code of ethics, which, as one would anticipate in an early code, lays the chief stress on two classes of sins, namely ritual transgressions against the gods, and sins against the persons of others. The stress laid upon ceremonial sins is both the great moral defect of this shorter code, and its most conspicuous evidence of antiquity. "The crime of killing a sacred goose," remarks Maspero, "or stealing a loaf from the bread offerings, was considered as abominable as calumny or murder"; and this, of course, is essentially characteristic of a primitive stage of ethical consciousness.

The shorter repudiation is followed, with that curious habit of vain repetition which is so characteristic of Egyptian religion, and that extraordinary tendency to accumulate inconsistent versions without either attempting to reconcile them or even seeing that reconciliation was needed, which is equally characteristic, by the longer version—generally known, with a fatuity of nomenclature which it would be hard to parallel, as "The Negative Confession." As a specimen of description which does not describe this must surely stand unrivalled. A Negative Confession is of course a contradiction in terms; and, moreover, there is not one trace in the whole thing, from first to last, of such a thing as confession. Confession was, and still is, a thing alien altogether to the Egyptian mind; and it is

only met in rare instances, and then only after the great religious revolution of Akhenaten had succeeded, even in its failure, in awakening a real moral sense in some individuals. "To this day," says Petrie, "the Egyptian will rely on justifying himself by sheer assertion that he has not done wrong, in face of absolute proofs to the contrary," and what is true of the modern Egyptian was evidently just as true of his remote ancestor of 1500 B.C.

The Greater Repudiation, as it might more fitly be called, is addressed to the forty-two genii, of terrifying aspect, who were supposed each to have the power of punishing one particular sin among the forty-two which were repudiated. The number was perhaps selected to correspond with the usual number of the nomes or provinces of Egypt, or perhaps, as Maspero has suggested, with the number of the cities of Egypt which recognised the authority of Osiris. These fearsome creatures had equally bizarre names, and as the dead man faces them he prefaces each repudiation by the name of the particular demon who had the duty of punishing the sin in question. "Hail, thou Crusher of Bones!" "I have not done so and so." "Hail, thou Eater of Shades!" "Hail, thou Leg of Fire!" and so forth. Stripped of these picturesque prolegomena, the actual repudiations are as follows (from the Papyrus of Nebseni, British Museum):

I have not done iniquity. I have not committed robbery with violence. I have done violence to no man. I have not committed theft. I have not slain man or woman.

I have not made light the bushel. I have not acted deceitfully. I have not purloined the things which belong to God. I have not uttered falsehood. I have not carried away food. I have not uttered evil words. I have attacked no man. I have not killed the beasts which are the property of God. I have not acted deceitfully. I have not laid waste ploughed land. I have never pried into matters. I have not set my mouth in motion against any man. I have not given way to anger concerning myself without a cause. I have not defiled the wife of a man. I have not committed any sin against purity. I have not struck fear into any man. I have not violated sacred times and seasons. I have not been a man of anger. I have not made myself deaf to words of right and truth. I have not stirred up strife. I have made no man to weep. I have not committed acts of impurity or sodomy. I have not eaten my heart. I have abused no man. I have not acted with violence. I have not judged hastily. I have not taken vengeance upon the god. I have not multiplied my speech overmuch. I have not acted with deceit or worked wickedness. I have not cursed the king. I have not fouled water. I have not made haughty my voice. I have not cursed the god. I have not behaved with insolence. I have not sought for distinctions. I have not increased my wealth, except with such things as are my own possessions. I have not thought scorn of the god who is in my city.

In this list it is quite obvious that the scribe had sometimes a difficulty in making out a list of forty-two separate sins, as he repeats himself several times. The main difference between this and the shorter repudiation is the greater stress laid upon freedom from sins of character and disposition in the longer version. Eighteen of such sins are repudiated in the longer, as

compared with six in the shorter form, while on the other hand the number of sins against the gods which are repudiated has fallen from ten to six, and this reduction is shared by the sins against the persons of others, which have shrunk from twelve to four. Probably it would be building too large a structure on too slight a foundation to suggest that this change marks a moral development in the interval between the composition of the two versions, for we must remember that the lists are largely conventional and arbitrary, depending as much on the taste and convenience of the scribe who wrote them in each case, as on anything else ; but at least the contrast is interesting.

On the whole, taking both versions together, and leaving out the crimes which are due to purely local conditions, such as the two which refer to dishonest appropriation of irrigation water—a characteristically Egyptian feature, we see that what the Egyptian wished to avoid, or to be believed to have avoided, was something like this—impiety and sacrilege ; crimes of violence against others, either direct or by incitation ; adultery and unnatural vice ; cruelty, ferocity, and unkindness towards defenceless inferiors. In these respects, the code of the Hall of Judgement does not differ much from that which has prevailed among all nations which have had any claim to be considered civilised ; and the idea that the Egyptian moral standard was higher than that of other great nations of antiquity cannot be maintained. What does, however, distinguish the repudiation is the stress

which is laid upon the inner duties, those duties which a man owes to himself, and which ennoble character. In respect of the stress which is laid upon self-restraint and self-possession, upon dignified reticence, and absence of meddlesomeness, upon the capacity to bear prosperity without the insolence of pride, and upon the determination to keep an open mind towards the truth, the Egyptian standard, if we are to judge it from these documents, reached a very high level. The "if," however, is a somewhat important one; and it would be quite permissible for the Devil's Advocate to argue that the Egyptian so sturdily repudiated these failings of character precisely because he was so prone to them—a line of argument which might seem to be supported by the constant recurrence of advice against the weaknesses of character which are repudiated in both versions of the Judgement scene in such books as the Instructions of Ptah-hetep and of Kagemni.

This aspect of the matter brings us to the most extraordinary feature of the whole extraordinary business—the fact that this whole chapter, with its austere tone of morality, is neither more nor less than an elaborate device to enable the unrighteous man to escape the consequences of his breaches of the very moral code which it inculcates.

"The chapter," says Professor Peet, "embodies an ethical belief, namely that happiness in the future life is dependent on morality in this life. Yet the very chapter itself is nothing more or less than a spell which enables the dead

man to avoid the consequences of the judgement by a knowledge of the right words to say and the right sins to repudiate. Nay, the matter is even cruder than this, for it is not necessary that he should actually know these things by heart, but merely that a papyrus roll on which they are inscribed should be laid beside him in the tomb." It might be added to the crudeness of the paradox, that the Egyptian believed that it was possible by art magic to rig even the balances of the Judgement in the interest of the dead man, if only he knew the right spell to recite at the proper moment. We have seen that in the vignette of the Judgement there occurs an appeal of the dead man to his heart not to shame him. This appeal forms a spell by itself, and occurs in a variety of forms. Here is one of the simpler forms of it :

O my heart, my mother ! O my heart, my mother ! O my heart of my existence upon earth ! May nought stand up to oppose me in judgement in the presence of the lords of the trial ; let it not be said of me, and of that which I have done, " He hath done evil against that which is right and true " ; may nought be against me in the presence of the great god, the Lord of Amentet ! Homage to thee, O my heart ! Homage to thee, O my heart ! Homage to you, O my reins ! "

The words of this or of a similar spell were written upon a scarab, which was placed above the heart of the dead man in his coffin (the Heart-Scarab), so that its potency might always be at his command.

The whole business of this shocking

inconsistency is one of the most curious phenomena in the history of religion. On the one side, you have the gradual development of a very highly organised moral sense, and the awakening of the consciousness that a man's destiny in the hereafter depended upon his conduct here—a conviction which can scarcely have failed to make for righteous living. On the other hand, you have the priesthood, whose true function it should have been to encourage this conviction, and make it the lever by which the lives of their people might be raised to higher levels, deliberately choosing, instead, to debauch the public conscience by asserting that it was possible, and even easy, to dodge the responsibilities which were so hard to discharge, and that for the payment of the requisite fees, the greatest sinner on earth could be passed into the Egyptian Heaven! The culmination of the whole corruption of the national conscience was reached when the priesthood made a trade of the multiplication of the rolls containing the declaration of innocence, and kept a stock of copies, each with a blank left for the name of a prospective purchaser, to be filled in when the price had been duly paid. The traces of this amiable custom are plainly to be seen on many of the funerary papyri. As Professor Breasted has put it, "Any citizen, whatever the character of his life, might thus secure from the scribes a certificate declaring that Blank was a righteous man, before it was known who Blank would be."

The impudence of such a proceeding is

only paralleled by its blasphemous hypocrisy. The only apology which can be made for the lay Egyptian who used his Indulgence, is that he was the dupe of his teachers who knew better ; the only apology for the priesthood is that the Egyptian priest's record is no worse than that of the priests of other lands. Priesthood has always stood for the debauching of the pure ideals of religion.

BOOK II
GRÆCO-ROMAN PAPYRI



PLATE XXI.

Above : Hawk, emblem of Rising Sun, with
Dog-headed Apes adoring.

Below : The Pillar of Osiris, with Isis and
Nephthys adoring.

Part of Vignette, Papyrus of Hunefer.

(By kind permission of the British Museum).

CHAPTER XI

MODERN PAPYRUS-HUNTING

WE have seen in an earlier chapter how the great papyri of the ancient period of Egyptian history were mainly acquired, and how, to a great extent, their presence in the collections which they now adorn was not due to any process of special and scientific search, but in many cases simply to what one might almost call the chapter of accidents. The great and sometimes almost perfect papyri of the palmy days of the Egyptian Empire have often come to harbour at last by a process which can only be described as one of drift, which might have landed them anywhere, rather than by a process of planned and conscious search, definitely pursuing them as its aim. A French traveller picks up a bundle of papyrus-rolls from an Egyptian boatman to add to his collection of "antikas," and the result is the priceless Sallier Collection; an Englishwoman travelling in Italy has another roll offered to her, and the *Tale of the Two Brothers* is saved for the world. Yuua's copy of the Book of the Dead is merely a single item in the wealth of the dead man's furnishing, and gets only a single plate to itself

out of the forty-four which Mr. T. M. Davis has devoted to the treasures of that wonderful find.

Very different from this process of sporadic drift has been the method of the modern papyrus-hunter, which within the last half-century has added literally tens of thousands of papyri to the great collections of the world. The papyrus-hunter of the present day sets out on his laborious task with the set purpose of looking for papyri and for nothing else. That is not to say, of course, that other objects of antiquity and interest will be despised, should they come in his way during his pursuit of his main quarry, any more than one can imagine a big-game hunter refusing to bag a lion because he is on the look-out for elephants ; but the other objects, no matter how interesting or valuable they may be, are casual—the papyri are essential. With this condition in view, his researches are carried on, not so much among the houses of an ancient site, though he may work there too, if he believes such work likely to be profitable, nor among the tombs of a site, though, as we may see, numbers of papyri have come from the necropoles of ancient Egyptian towns, but among the rubbish-heaps of the various towns, where the contents of the waste-paper baskets of the inhabitants were dumped perhaps for centuries. Obviously the ash-pits, so to speak, of a town are not the places where anyone in his senses would go to look for the more intrinsically valuable prizes of the archæologist. Pieces of jewellery, and articles of art and luxury, would never find their way

there, even when broken and beyond use, though broken crockery probably would, and would prove valuable. But the curious characteristic of the ancient Egyptian, for a number of centuries very precious to us, was that, instead of burning the contents of his waste-paper baskets, as we should do, he shot them on his domestic rubbish-heap, not without tearing them across in most cases, but generally without so mutilating them as to render them illegible or incomprehensible. No doubt it was a very bad habit, from the point of view of prudence and privacy, and the folks who were guilty of it would doubtless have done very differently had they known that their most private correspondence, their accounts of domestic squabbles, the complaints of husband against wife, and of wife against husband, their business affairs, the very lists of the things which they had been obliged to lodge with that useful but undesirable friend the pawnbroker, were going to be unearthed more than two thousand years after they were dead, and published broadcast, or at least as broadcast as the circulation of scientific magazines extends, for the gratification of the curiosity and sometimes for the amusement of a set of people whose ancestors were outer barbarians when the documents in question were written. All the same we may be thankful for the carelessness or the confiding quality of these same Egyptians and Greeks of the centuries immediately before and after the coming of our Lord ; for the revelations which have been drawn from their ash-pits have taught us more of the actual human life of these days, and taught

it in a far more intimate and vivid fashion, than could ever have come to pass in any other way.

“ It has been aptly remarked,” says Dr. A. S. Hunt, one of the foremost of the eager seekers who have been making the life of these centuries rise again before our eyes, “ that as for the archæologist the nineteenth century was pre-eminently a period of stone, so the twentieth will be pre-eminently a period of paper ; and the essential difference between the inscriptions and the non-literary papyri is this, that whereas the former were consciously designed for the public eye and for posterity, the latter, the papyri, are as a class ephemeral and personal. Their value lies largely in the insight they afford into the business of common everyday life, from the official in his office down to the labourer in his fields. They draw aside the curtain, so to say, and show us the figures actually at work, off their guard, free of all artificiality or pose.” We have seen already, in connection with the papyri which have preserved for us the fragments of Egyptian fiction, how supremely valuable is this unconscious self-revelation for the true comprehension of national or individual characteristics ; and now, in the papyri of the Græco-Roman period, we see the same point emphasised by a collection of documents, none of them of any great historical importance, most of them only relating to matters of passing moment and individual interest, but all of them combining to give us a picture of the real life of the time, the actual emotions, passions, hopes and fears, loves and hates, not of great historical lay-figures, but of men and women,

who were as really alive then as we who read the pathetic scraps of their stories are now. This is the real wonder of the Græco-Roman papyri, not that they have given back to us such large fragments of Euripides's *Hypsipyle* as to make it possible to reconstruct to a great extent the plot of that lost play, nor that we owe to them so much of the *Ichneutæ* of Sophocles as to allow of a performance of the drama being given in Germany, nor that a scrap of a list of Olympian victors has fixed for us several doubtful dates in Greek literary history and supplied important evidence for the history of Greek sculpture, nor even that they have given us the earliest known manuscripts of both the Old and the New Testaments, and more than one collection of unrecorded words of Jesus Christ ; but that they have given us back the intimate personal life of ten of the most vivid centuries of the world's history and taught us to see the men and women of those centuries as they saw and knew themselves.

The history of papyrus-finding in the sense in which we are now dealing with it has lasted, roughly speaking, for a century and a half ; but it is only within the last half-century that the search for these documents has aroused general interest and been carried on in a scientific fashion. We have already seen that the first important discovery, that of the *Charta Borgiana*, took place in 1778. It was practically a century after this date before any very large addition was made to our knowledge of Greek papyri, though in the year 1820 a number of finds were

made in the neighbourhood of Memphis and Thebes, including a particularly interesting set of documents relating to the management of the Serapeum, the great temple of Osiris-Apis, at the former town. These documents were found, according to the Arabs who made the discovery, enclosed in a single vessel, but were divided and sold separately, so as to make a larger profit out of them; and so the collection is scattered among the principal museums of Europe, thirty-eight being in Paris, four in the Vatican, four in Leyden, and nineteen in the British Museum. Next year came the first important literary discovery—that of a manuscript containing the XXIVth Book of the Iliad; and then in 1846 a large roll was discovered, containing three of the lost orations of Hyperides, the famous orator contemporary with Demosthenes, who had been up to this time no more than a name to modern scholars.

None of these discoveries, however, could really be termed the result of papyrus-hunting in any scientific sense. They were sporadic, and in the main purely accidental; and even the famous discovery, almost exactly a century after the finding of the *Charta Borgiana*, of the series of papyri now known as the Rainer Papyri, was not managed on the lines of modern work. This great mass of papyri was unearthed on the site of Arsinoë, the ancient Crocodilopolis, in the Fayum, a district of Egypt which has proved to be extraordinarily rich in this material; but the work of excavation was very badly managed and probably quite a half of the large mass of material

of which the remainder went to Vienna to the collection of the Archduke Rainer, perished through lack of adequate supervision of the native diggers who secured it.

The years 1889-1890, however, saw the beginning of a new epoch, in which the rich material which came to light began to be handled in a really adequate manner. During that season Professor Flinders Petrie, to whom Egyptology is indebted for so many of the first steps which have led to results of vast importance, was working at the site of a Ptolemaic cemetery at Gurob, a town near the mouth of the Fayum. The material which he found there was at first sight most unpromising. "The coffins," says their discoverer, "were all unpainted; of rough brown wood, and thin. . . . Their only decoration was a carved wooden head. These heads are of the most marvellous rudeness; a few are good enough to be grotesque, but others are things of which a Pacific islander would be ashamed. The noses are long triangular ridges, the eyes marked with two holes in the board, and the mouth with a third line. In some the nose is pegged on; and in others a ghastly attempt at improvement is made by painting black and white eyes. Within these grossly rough cases were comparatively fine cartonnages."

More unpromising material could scarcely be imagined than these rude coffins, which had not even the merit of high antiquity to compensate for their crudity; for to say "Ptolemaic" in Egyptology is to say "a thing of the day before yesterday." But while the

outer husk was unattractive, the kernel, or rather the inner wrapping, was a very different story. "Cartonnage" was a kind of material used by the Egyptians for the purposes for which we should now employ papier mâché. In its earlier form it consisted of layers of damp linen firmly stuck together with a kind of paste, and then covered while wet with wet stucco. The linen and stucco on being subjected to pressure became a single mass, which in its wet condition could be moulded under pressure to any desired shape. When used for the inner coffins of mummies, the cartonnage was moulded into the shape of the head and body of the mummy. "The separate pieces of cartonnage at this time," says Professor Petrie, "were the headpiece coming down with a spread on the chest; the pectoral or collar-plate, semicircular; the open-work frame with figures of gods; the flat rectangular plate upon the legs, about 4 by 18 inches, with the four genii, and sometimes Isis and Nebhat; and the foot-case, with sandals painted on the bottom or two slips separate on the soles of the feet. . . . The earlier heads were tolerably well made, of folds of linen pasted together, and moulded on a block. These blocks were in two parts: the back half quite smooth behind, which could be withdrawn after moulding; and the front half, with the face in relief, which could be lifted out after the back half was gone. The cloth was pressed on wet, and retains the marks of the junction and carving of the mould. Over the cloth was a coat of stucco, painted dark blue, and often the face was gilt and burnished very



XXII. A CARTONNAGE COFFIN.



skilfully. In later time, about Philadelphos, papyrus was substituted for cloth, and several layers of Demotic or Greek papyri were glued together, covered with stucco, and painted. . . . The later stage of this papyrus cartonnage was under Philadelphos and Euergetes, when they no longer glued together the papyri, but merely soaked and plastered them one on the other, trusting to crossing them, and a good coat of plaster and glue on the outside, to hold them together."

Here, then, in these later coffins, where the papyrus cartonnage was not stuck together with glue, but merely wetted and crossed, lay the value of Professor Petrie's finds; for the papyri, when detached from one another, proved to be practically all inscribed with either Demotic or Greek writing. "The Egyptian undertaker," says Professor Sayce, "before making a mummy-case, bought the waste-paper basket of one of his neighbours, and turned the papers that were in it into papier mâché for the particular mummy-case he had on hand. Hence it happens that the papyri coming from a particular mummy all belong to the same collection, the cartonnage of one mummy-case, for example, being composed of letters and documents relating to a certain Kleon, that of another of the papers belonging to Diophanes, and so on. Of course in some instances the same collection served to produce papier mâché for more than one mummy-case." Owing to this quaint custom of Ptolemaic Egypt we were thus presented with groups of related documents belonging mostly to a period

considerably older than the oldest body of Greek manuscripts previously known, older even than the age of the great grammarians and critics of Alexandria and their editions of the earlier classical texts." Most of the manuscripts belonged to round about 250 B.C., and in no case were they later than 220 B.C.

One can imagine the deplorable condition in which most of these ancient manuscripts were, after the barbarous usage to which they had been subjected by the ancient undertaker, and their subsequent burial for more than two thousand years. "The papyri recovered from the glued cases," says Professor Petrie, "are mostly in a bad case; the gluing, the soaking, and separating, and washing, all injure the writing; and the glue had attracted insects, who in most cases have eaten the papyrus entirely away, and left nothing but a hollow double film of stucco. The later cases, made with plain wetting, are far the best sources of papyri; and where a document has been used whole, and put in a flat part (as down the back, or in the pectoral), it may be taken out none the worse for its burial of over two thousand years."

The Gurob papyri were entrusted to Dr. (Sir J. P.) Mahaffy, and were patiently deciphered by him, and later by Professor J. G. Smyly. "Seldom," says Dr. Mahaffy, "has it fallen to the lot of modern scholars to spend such days as we spent together at Oxford in the Long Vacation of 1890: poring all day, while the sun shone, over these faint and fragmentary records; discussing in the evening the stray

lights we had found and their possible significance. Gradually pieces of a Platonic dialogue emerged, which presently we determined to be the *Phædo*; then a leaf of a tragic poem, identified beyond question as the *Antiope* of Euripides; and with these were many legal or official documents with dates, which arrested and surprised us. For instead of the late Ptolemies, or the Roman emperors, whose names occur in the Greek papyri already found, here we could read nothing but *Ptolemy the son of Ptolemy Soter, and Ptolemy the son of Ptolemy and Arsinoë, brother-gods*—in other words, the second and third kings in the series (280–220 B.C.).” We have become more or less familiar, since then, with Greek papyri of similar or even earlier date; but these Gurob papyri will always be memorable as having provided the first large body of such early material. Apart from the literary documents in the find, which embraced part of the *Antiope* of Euripides, and part of a noble manuscript of the *Phædo*, which can scarcely have been written later than 300 B.C., and may possibly have been written during the lifetime of Plato himself, the bulk of the collection was made up of legal and official documents, wills, official correspondence, including that of Kleon, architect and Commissioner of Works in the Fayum, accounts, and private letters.

One of the most curious and romantic discoveries of papyri on record was also made by Petrie the year before the discoveries at Gurob. This was the find of a large roll of papyrus containing the greater part of the second book of

the *Iliad*. The find was made at Hawara, and Miss Amelia Edwards's description of it may be quoted. "The great Homer Papyrus of 1889 was rolled up as a pillow for the head of its former owner; and its former owner was a young and apparently beautiful woman, with little ivory teeth, and long black silky hair. The inscription on her coffin was illegible, and we are alike ignorant of her name, her nationality, and her history. She may have been an Egyptian, but she was more probably a Greek. We only know that she was young and fair, and she so loved her Homer that those who laid her in her last resting-place buried her precious papyrus in her grave. That papyrus is now among the treasures of the Bodleian Library at Oxford, and all that is preserved of its possessor—her skull and her lovely hair—are now in the South Kensington Museum, London." Professor Sayce endorses Miss Edwards's account of the unknown lady's attractiveness. "The skull of the mummy showed that its possessor had been young and attractive-looking, with features at once small, intellectual, and finely chiselled, and belonging distinctly to the Greek type. Through the generosity of Mr. Haworth, both skull and papyrus are now in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, along with a tress of the unknown Hypatia's black hair." The skull and tress of hair are actually in the Bodleian and not at South Kensington. They are not on exhibition now. Somewhat akin to this pathetic evidence of love for literature is that of the find, made near Memphis, of the *Persæ* of Timotheos, the oldest

Greek literary manuscript in existence, dating from the fourth century B.C. This was found in the coffin of a Greek soldier, by whose side it had been laid in a leathern bag.

Of all curious places wherein to find papyri, surely the most curious is the gullet of a crocodile. Yet it was in such a place that many papyri were found by Grenfell and Hunt, when working at Tebtunis. In the course of their excavations they came across a crocodile cemetery—an unusual thing in any other land, but not so in certain parts of Egypt, where the crocodile was a sacred animal, just as elsewhere the cat or the ibis was sacred. One of their workmen, sick of finding nothing but crocodile burials where he had hoped for decent sarcophagi, smashed one of the burials in pieces, when the extraordinary fact came to light that the creature had been wrapped in the same kind of papyrus cartonnage as the Gurob mummies, and that in several instances papyrus rolls had been stuffed into the animals' mouths or into other cavities in their bodies. From this strange source came a number of important official documents relating to the internal administration of Egypt during the later Ptolemaic period.

It was in 1895 that the first excavations definitely undertaken with the single object of the acquisition of Greek papyri were entered upon in the Fayum by Messrs. Hogarth, Grenfell, and Hunt. The results were wonderfully successful; but they seemed almost trifling in comparison with those which awaited the same workers, when, in 1897, Messrs. Grenfell and

Hunt began their work at Oxyrhynchus, the modern Behneseh, a town which is not in the Fayum, like so many other papyrus sites, but on the edge of the western desert, about 120 miles south of Cairo. Oxyrhynchus was in ancient days the capital of the Oxyrhynchite nome, and was therefore a place where one might expect to find the residences of people who could afford a library of literary texts, and probably also the official correspondence of the local administrators. Further there was the possibility of finding on the site fragments of early Christian literature of an earlier date than the fourth century, to which the oldest manuscripts of the New Testament belonged; for Oxyrhynchus was famous in the fourth and fifth centuries for the number of its churches and monasteries, which implied that in the darker days of persecution before the official recognition of Christianity the faith must have been already taking a strong hold upon the affections of the local population. It seemed likely, therefore, that some traces of that earlier period would be left in the shape of the sacred writings which had maintained the secret faith of the people during the time of persecution.

As every one now knows, all these expectations were fulfilled in such ample fashion as almost to overload the fortunate explorers with the abundance of their treasures. A preliminary investigation of the two cemeteries of the place, the Græco-Roman and the Pharaonic, yielded comparatively little of any account; but when the excavators settled down, on January 11,

to the work on the rubbish-mounds of the town, it became evident almost at once that they had struck an almost inexhaustible vein of ancient documents. On the second day a crumpled scrap of papyrus was found, which, when examined by Dr. Hunt later in the week, was found to contain in an inscription in Uncial Greek characters, the word *KARPHOS*, "Mote," which at once suggested to him the saying of Jesus about the mote and the beam. Further examination proved the correctness of the suggestion, but also the fact that the fragment did not belong to any one of the extant Gospels, but was a portion of a collection of otherwise unrecorded sayings of our Lord—the world-famous "Logia." The very next day Dr. Hunt identified another fragment as containing a portion of the first chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel; and both this fragment and that of the Logia were seen to be not later in date than the third century A.D., probably not much later than A.D. 200, so that they were a century older than the oldest manuscripts of the New Testament. "It is not improbable," says Dr. Grenfell, "that they were the remains of a library belonging to some Christian who perished in the persecution during Diocletian's reign, and whose books were then thrown away. By a happy freak of fortune we had thus within a week of excavating in the town lit upon two examples of the kind of papyri which we most desired to find."

The stream whose first tricklings were of such importance speedily grew to a volume which proved almost embarrassing. For ten weeks it

took two men working continuously to provide enough tin boxes in which to store the papyri as they were unearthed. Here is Dr. Grenfell's account of a single day's results: "We came upon a mound which had a thick layer consisting almost entirely of papyrus rolls. There was room for six pairs of men and boys to be working simultaneously at this storehouse, and the difficulty was to find enough baskets in all Behneseh to contain the papyri. At the end of the day's work no less than thirty-six good-sized baskets were brought in from this place, several of them stuffed with fine rolls 3 to 10 feet long, including some of the largest Greek rolls I have ever seen. As the baskets were required for the next day's work, Mr. Hunt and I started at 9 p.m. after dinner to stow away the papyri in some empty packing-cases which we fortunately had at hand. The task was only finished at three in the morning, and on the following night we had a repetition of it, for twenty-five more baskets were filled before the place was exhausted."

Only inferior to this amazing treasure-trove in quantity, and exceeding it in the intrinsic value of the texts discovered, was the find of January 13, 1906. Again the description of the thing is best given in the words of the discoverers themselves. "Shortly before sunset we reached, at about 6 feet from the surface, a place where in the third century A.D. a basketful of broken papyrus rolls had been thrown away. In the fading light it was impossible to extricate the whole find that evening; but a strong guard was posted on the spot during the night, and the

remainder was safely removed during the following forenoon. Before being condemned to the rubbish-heap, the papyri had, as usual, been torn up; but amid hundreds of smaller fragments there were a couple of cores of rolls, containing ten or twelve columns, other pieces containing five or six, and many more one or two columns." Wonderful as the amount of the material was, its quality made it tenfold more precious. Two large poetical fragments proved to contain parts of the *Pæans* of Pindar and the *Hypsipyle* of Euripides, already mentioned; and among the prose fragments, two contained parts of the *Phædrus*, and one the *Symposium* of Plato, this last fragment preserving for us the second half of the dialogue, in twenty-six columns. Most important of all was a large manuscript containing part of a new *History of Greece*, which has been variously assigned by different scholars to Ephorus, Theopompus, or Cratippus. Of course such halcyon days as these do not represent the average results of the work; but if they had stood alone they would have been ample justification for the arduous work which was carried on at Oxyrhynchus between 1897 and 1907, when the excavations closed.

The success of the Oxyrhynchus excavations gave a tremendous impetus to the work of papyrus-hunting, and the Oxford scholars were followed by German, French, and Italian expeditions, whose work has been attended with very considerable success, though no site, with the possible exception of Hermopolis, has come

anywhere near Oxyrhynchus in the richness of its results. Important collections of papyri have been formed at all the great museums of this country, the Continent, and America ; and the literature of the subject is almost overwhelming in its amount. Indeed it has been suggested that the world has had rather more than enough of Greek, Roman, and Byzantine documents from Egypt, to which unspeakable heresy the only and sufficient answer is that we can never have more than enough of material which either makes the past more living to the present, or helps to elucidate the great works of the supreme writers of the classical age.

Our later chapters will deal with some of the details, and will present some specimens of the material which has thus been accumulated ; but in the meantime let us try to picture to ourselves the nature of the work on a papyrus-yielding site, and the conditions under which it is carried on. Plate XXIV will give us some idea of a papyrus site, though in this case the rubbish-heaps of Antinoë, which is the site represented, proved rather disappointing, though a fair quantity of material was forthcoming. The blacker portions of the uninviting-looking mounds in the picture represent the places where the native *sebakh* diggers have been at work ; and these nightmares of the archæologist play such an important and disastrous part, not only on papyrus sites, but wherever ancient buildings have stood, that a word must be spared as to them and their work. The dust and dry earth of the ancient mounds and house-fillings of an old Egyptian town is

laden with nitrous material which is of great manurial value. This nitre-laden dust is called *sebakh*, and the digging of it out of such ancient sites is a regular business, for which concessions are given by the Government. These concessionaires, the *sebakhin*, are drawn from the most ignorant of the populace, and their methods are utterly disastrous to the interests of scientific investigation; yet the work is an economic necessity for agriculture in Egypt, and unless better methods can be devised for the control of the diggers, and the proper registering of the antiquities which they come upon, the loss to science must just be put up with. The Government licence to dig may be granted to the small man with a few donkeys or camels, or to a large contractor, who does his work with large gangs of workmen and a trolley line to carry away his output. In either case, a watchman or watchmen will be paid out of the price of the licence, and the duty of these supervisors is to see that all antiquities found are reported, and duly handed over to the Service of Antiquities. The watchmen, however, belonging to the same class as the *sebakhin*, and sharing both their ignorance, and their desire to make a little unlicensed profit, very often are in league with the diggers, and share the profits of any finds which are made, with the result that the antiquities which are found seldom find their way to the proper authorities, but are mostly passed on to the dealers, with the result that they are lost, so far as any scientific value goes. Papyri, being of so delicate and fragile a nature, suffer extremely from the rough handling

to which they are exposed by the *sebakhin*, and the neglect of small fragments must lead to the loss of much valuable material. While, therefore, the *sebakhin* are the natural (and inevitable) enemies of all scientific investigation, and have the advantage over the true excavator that they are always at work, they are specially deadly to the papyrus-hunter, who, though he may ruefully admit that Egypt cannot do without them, would, no doubt, cheerfully throw their hearts to the Devourer of the Unjustified.

Plate XXV 1 shows a typical rubbish-mound on an Egyptian site; but not all rubbish-mounds yield papyri. Indeed, on any given site, the papyrus-yielding mound will be the exception rather than the rule. A mound, for instance, may be wholly composed of builder's refuse, lime or sand, cinders, ashes, or potsherds, while on occasion, as at Antinoë, a mound will consist of earth mixed with wool-refuse, indicating the former existence on the spot of a firm of wool-workers. Such materials, generally speaking, are useless for the preservation of papyri. A stratum of potsherds may contain papyri; but they are sure to be found in bad condition, as the dry beds of sherd impart an intense dryness and brittleness to the papyrus, and frequently destroy the ink. A papyrus-bearing mound will be one which has strata of what the natives call *afsh*, which consists of earth mixed with vegetable matter, generally twigs and straw. Not all *afsh* is equally good for the preservation of papyri, but, generally speaking, it makes the best bed for the fragile rolls. A rough idea of whether any

particular mound is likely to yield papyri may be obtained from its quality underfoot. A mound composed of lime and sand will be hard to the tread, while one with upper layers of *afsh* will show a marked resilience. This, however, is not an infallible test, and the only way of reaching certainty as to the quality of the mound is to cut into it such a trial trench as is represented in Plate XXV 2. The cutting of the trench leaves a high facing wall in front of the diggers, while behind them is a retaining wall much lower than the facing wall, but high enough to hold up the weight of the earth thrown out. This trench, as it is cut down through the mound, will expose a section of the different strata of which the mound is composed, and in this way the presence or absence of the papyrus-bearing *afsh* can be detected. When the trench has reached a depth at which it has done all that can be expected of it—a limit which is marked, either by the presence of the damp which is destructive of papyri, or by the entire absence of the material sought—the diggers finally undercut the retaining-wall, and examine its materials as it falls. If a trench like that shown reveals the presence of papyri, the process is repeated until the whole mound has been examined.

Sometimes, as we have seen in the case of the earliest finds at Oxyrhynchus, the very earliest stages of this process have proved fruitful. Indeed, in the earlier part of the work on this most fruitful site, trenching was often scarcely needed. "The papyri," says Dr. Grenfell, "were, as a rule, not very far from the surface ;

in one patch of ground, indeed, merely turning up the soil with one's boot would frequently disclose a layer of papyri, and it was seldom that we found even tolerably well-preserved documents at a greater depth than 10 feet. The explanation is that the damp soaking up from below, owing to the rise of the Nile bed, has proved fatal to what papyri there may have been in the lower levels. It was not uncommon to find at 2 or 3 feet from the surface in the lower parts of mounds rolls which had been hopelessly spoiled by damp." During the later stages of the work on the same site, however, this depth was often exceeded, and one of the largest and latest finds of papyri at Oxyrhynchus was made at a depth of 25 feet below the surface of the mound. As may be imagined, trenches of such a depth take a week or more to cut, and the work is very slow and laborious. Indeed, it must not be inferred, from the account of the wonderful successes at Oxyrhynchus, that excavating for papyrus, any more than any other type of excavation, is all prizes and no blanks. Prizes there are, just as in the case of tomb-excavation, or any other of the forms of scientific research in Egypt; but the prizes come comparatively seldom, and the disappointments often. Mr. Weigall has told us, in his own light-hearted fashion, of one excavation at which it was his fortune to preside, and whose site he had himself selected. The net result, after six weeks' work, was one mummified cat! "To watch the clouds of dust go up from the tip-heap, where tons of unprofitable rubbish rolled down the hillside all

day long, was an occupation for the damned. Yet that is excavating as it is usually found to be." Not always, fortunately, as the results recorded in the preceding pages show.

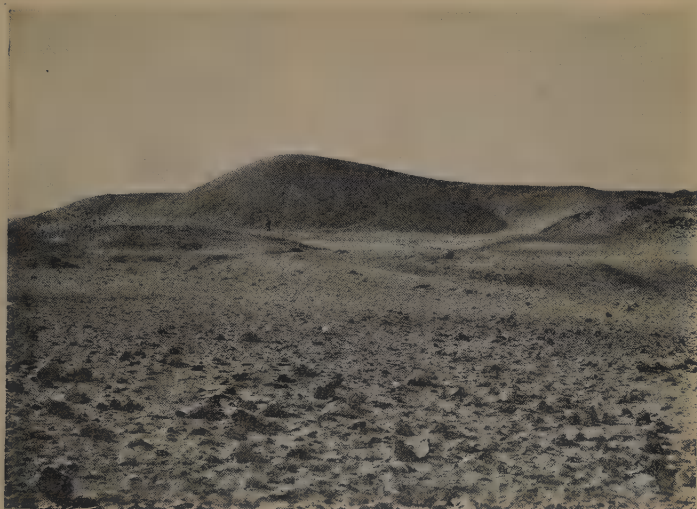
One or two of the curiosities of the business of papyrus-hunting may be noticed before we go on to the consideration of the most interesting results. We have already seen the curious evidence which the discoveries at Gurob and Tebtunis afforded as to the trade methods of the local undertakers of these places more than two thousand years ago, whether they were dealing with human beings or with crocodiles. Antinoë, which proved in many ways rather a disappointment to the excavator, yielded to Mr. J. de M. Johnson a piece of equally curious evidence as to the methods of the local shoemakers of the end of the fourth and beginning of the fifth centuries A.D. At this period the shoemaker began to substitute leather for the reed material of which shoes and sandals had previously been made. It is interesting to learn that the introduction of the new material gave greater latitude in design to the aspiring souls of the Crispins of Antinoë, and that from this time onwards even the more common patterns of sandal have incised ornament on sole or strap, while the shoe has an ornamental rosette on the toe. Perhaps the real curiosity of the business, however, was not quite so praiseworthy as the development of beauty in this humble sphere. Paper soles are often held up as a reproach to our modern methods of work, and an instance of modern sham; but the shoemakers of Antinoë, fifteen

centuries ago, knew these tricks of the trade as well as the most modern of their successors. "Just as the modern shoemaker inserts newspaper between the upper and lower sole, so the ancient was accustomed to use papyrus." Let us hope, at all events, that the upper and lower sole were of sound leather, whatever the packing between may have been. It is disappointing to be told that we shall not be able to find out what was the quality of the literature on which the wayfarers of Antinoë trampled daily, as the heat of the foot has effectually effaced the writing.

Antinoë yielded also, in the shape of a small inscribed stele, confirmation of the evidence given by one of the Rylands papyri of the good fortune which attended scholarship in those days. The inscription on the slab reads, "For Good Fortune. The Council of the citizens of Antinoöpolis, New Greeks, in honour of Flavius Mæcius . . . Dionysodorus, one of those maintained in the Museum (of Alexandria) free from charges, a Platonic philosopher and councillor." One does not hear, in our own days, of our local parish councils putting up memorials to such local scholars as have done honour to their homes by being elected by a grateful Government to free sustenance in the British Museum, or other more suitable place, for the rest of their days—probably because one does not hear of doles for scholarship on any such lavish scale. But then, in those days, as Mr. Browning makes Balaustion tell us :

Greeks were Greeks, and hearts were hearts,
And poetry was power,

to say nothing of Platonic Philosophy !



XXV(A). TYPICAL RUBBISH-MOUND.



XXV(B). A TRIAL TRENCH.

The difference between the Greek, even the degenerate Greek of these late days of the Græco-Roman period and the Dispersion, and ourselves, from an intellectual point of view, is admirably brought out by another of the curiosities of papyrus-hunting, namely, that Homeric Papyri are so plentiful as to become rather a nuisance, and a drug in the market. "The commonest author of all is Homer," says Dr. Hunt. "The great popularity of the bard is indeed one of the chief trials of the excavator's patience. He sees an extra large literary fragment emerging from the soil, and wonders for a brief moment what new treasure he has found—but ten to one it is only old Homer again." It is perhaps fortunate for our intellectual reputation with future days that we burn our waste-paper instead of leaving it to be thrown on our ash-pits; but if our practice were that of the Greeks of the Dispersion in Egypt, one wonders what would be the idea formed by a future excavator of the intellectual standard of our nation. It is scarcely probable, one fancies, that copies of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, or of Shakespeare's Plays would be so common as to annoy the excavator; rather one fancies him cursing with renewed fervour as copy after copy of the *Daily Mail* or *Comic Cuts*, or any other of the chief intellectual stimulants of our time, rewarded his efforts. Conceivably, on some Scottish site an odd copy of the works of Robert Burns might emerge, in company with many empty and broken bottles, the product of some Burns's Night; but even of Burns the quantity would be infinitesimal, in comparison

with the wealth of betting news and football reports. Such things, of course, are not wanting, even among the papyri. Oxyrhynchus had a pronounced love for horse-racing, which finds expression in several agreements with trainers for the management of racing-stables, and there are other evidences of frivolity, to which we may have occasion to return. But the Greek, even in his worst days, and in a strange land, was a curious creature, who actually believed that a man's mind was the most important part of him, and regulated his life more or less on that ridiculous principle! "There is," says Dr. Hunt, "a general reflection suggested by a survey of these multifarious remnants of perished works, to which I would refer—I mean the remarkable popularity and diffusion of Greek letters in Egypt. The number of literary fragments found at Oxyrhynchus, for example, was enormous; and Oxyrhynchus was only one provincial capital out of many, whose inhabitants are not to be credited with a much higher grade of cultivation than their neighbours!" It is only with the spread of Christianity that a decline in the number of fragments of the great literature of Greece sets in; but Dr. Hunt is careful to take away beforehand any comfort which we might derive from that fact. The Christian Greek of Egypt did not turn from Homer and Sappho and Euripides to cheap magazines and whatever rubbish then corresponded to our leading powers of the Press; he turned to more serious reading still! "The right-minded man would tend to replace Sappho with the

Psalms, and satisfy his appetite for history and romance with lives of the saints and martyrs ! ” We are, no doubt, far ahead of these extraordinary Greeks, and can afford to look down on them as hopelessly out of date, and yet, one wonders !

CHAPTER XII

THEOLOGICAL AND LITERARY TEXTS

OF all the discoveries made during the progress of the work at Oxyrhynchus, there was none which aroused such deep and widespread interest as that of the Sayings of Jesus Christ, which was one of the very earliest fruits of the labours of Grenfell and Hunt. In the preceding chapter we saw how the precious fragment was identified by the presence of the single word *KARPHOS*, "mote," and how its discovery was immediately followed by that of a fragment of the first chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel. The actual sayings themselves are as follows :

Logion I. . . . and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

Logion II. Jesus saith, Except ye fast to the world, ye shall in no wise find the kingdom of God ; and except ye make the sabbath a real sabbath, ye shall not see the Father.

Logion III. Jesus saith, I stood in the midst of the world, and in the flesh was I seen of them, and I found all men drunken, and none found I athirst among them, and my soul grieveth over the sons of men, because they are blind in their heart, and see not.

Logion IV. . . . poverty.

Logion V. Jesus saith, Wherever there are two, they are not without God, and wherever there is one alone, I say, I am with him. Raise the stone, and there thou shalt find Me, cleave the wood, and there am I.

Logion VI. Jesus saith, A prophet is not acceptable in his own country, neither doth a physician work cures upon them that know him.

Logion VII. Jesus saith, A city built upon the top of a high hill and stablished, can neither fall nor be hid.

Logion VIII. Jesus saith, Thou hearest with one ear (but the other ear thou hast closed).

This is not the place for any commentary on the contents of this remarkable little fragment. Viewing the Sayings as a whole, it cannot be said that they add anything of conspicuous novelty or importance to our knowledge of the manner or matter of the teaching of Jesus. Parallels to the line of thought of almost all of them, if not to the actual expression of them, may be found without difficulty in our canonical Gospels. To this general fact, there are two rather striking exceptions, the first in *Logion II*, where the sabbatic tradition is emphasised in a fashion which is to say the least unusual in connection with the teaching of Jesus, the second in the latter part of *Logion V*. The earlier part of the *Logion*, is, of course, familiar enough, though in slightly different form; but the second part finds no parallel in any extant utterance of Jesus, and is a vivid and arresting statement and illustration of the immanence of the Saviour in all things. The supreme interest of the *Logia*, however, is the evidence which they give of the

means by which a much wider knowledge of the teaching of Jesus than is given by the canonical Gospels was diffused at an early date throughout the Christian community. Such collections of Sayings would not have the authority of recognised apostolic writings, but would come in to supplement the work of the evangelists and to add touches of light and shade and colour to the outlines drawn by them.

The appearance of the fragment is shown in Plates XXVI and XXVII. It measures $5\frac{3}{4}$ by $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches, but was originally somewhat larger, as it is broken at the bottom. In the top right-hand corner of the *verso* there is a numeral, plainly a pagination mark indicating that the leaf formed part of a book, in our modern sense, and not of a roll, and that in this case it was the *verso* of the fragment which was uppermost in the Codex.

In the end of February, 1903, Messrs. Grenfell and Hunt paid a second visit to Oxyrhynchus, and resumed their work there. Curiously enough this second effort was rewarded by another discovery of a further set of Sayings of Jesus, of almost equal importance, and of similar date to the first, though of somewhat different, and on the whole rather more elaborate, character. This new set of Logia consists of forty-two incomplete lines written on the *verso* of a survey-list of various pieces of land, thus affording an instance of the comparative costliness of papyrus, when such an important manuscript was written on a piece of material already used. A notable difference from the earlier collection is that the second set contains a brief introduction to the group, and

it is also noticeable that while the first set of sayings had little connection with one another, four of the second set refer to the Kingdom of Heaven. The sayings are as follows :

Introduction.—These are the (wonderful ?) words which Jesus the living (lord) spake to . . . and Thomas, and he said unto (them), Every one that hearkens to these words shall never taste of death.

Logion I. Jesus saith, Let not him who seeks . . . cease until he finds, and when he finds he shall be astonished ; astonished he shall reach the kingdom, and having reached the kingdom he shall rest.

Logion II. Jesus saith (Ye ask ? who are those) that draw us (to the kingdom) if the kingdom is in Heaven . . . the fowls of the air and all beasts that are under the earth or upon the earth, and the fishes of the sea, (these are they which draw) you, and the kingdom of Heaven is within you ; and whosoever shall know himself shall find it. (Strive therefore ?) to know yourselves, and ye shall be aware that ye are the sons of the . . . Father ; (and ?) ye shall know yourselves . . . and ye are. . . .

Logion III. Jesus saith, A man shall not hesitate . . . to ask . . . concerning his place in the kingdom. (Ye shall know) that many that are first shall be last and the last first and (they shall have eternal life).

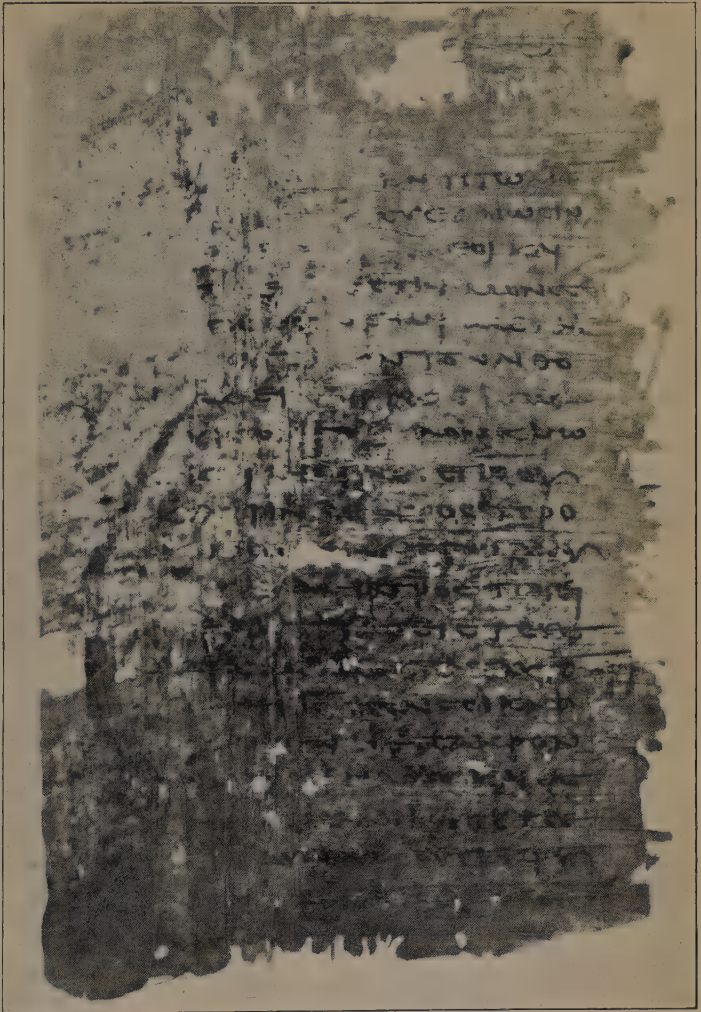
Logion IV. Jesus saith, Everything that is not before thy face and that which is hidden from thee shall be revealed to thee. For there is nothing hidden which shall not be made manifest, nor buried which shall not be raised.

Logion V. His disciples question him and say, How shall we fast and how shall we (pray ?) and what (commandment) shall we keep . . . Jesus saith, . . . do not . . . blessed is he.

The opinion of the discoverers is that this

fragment belongs to almost the same period as the previous one—namely, to the middle or end of the third century A.D., the earlier fragment being datable perhaps to a decade before its successor. While this is so, the reader will probably be struck by the fact that in the second series we are dealing with a form of thought and expression which is neither so simple nor so fresh as in the first series, and that as compared with the canonical Gospels both of the series are lacking in these same qualities. In its passage down the years the utterance of Jesus, apart from the aspect of it presented by our four evangelists, is beginning to lose some of its incomparable freshness, and to take on some of the colour and complexity of the later age through which it is being transmitted.

The same remark may be made with regard to the fragment of a lost Gospel which was another of the fruits of this second visit to Oxyrhynchus. This fragment gives us the conclusion of an utterance of Jesus which is parallel to part of the Sermon on the Mount, and follows it with the account of a question put to Him by the disciples, and His answer. The fragment belongs to a Gospel which is closely allied to the Synoptists and particularly to Matthew and Mark. The question and answer so clearly correspond to a passage in the Gospel according to the Egyptians, and to the uncanonical Gospel used by the author of the Second Epistle of Clement, that it is obvious that these two must be intimately connected with it. Probably the fragment was composed in Egypt before A.D. 150, though



XXVI. THE LOGIA OF JESUS. FIRST SERIES.
(Recto.)



whether it was earlier or later than the other Gospels mentioned is not certain. The fragment runs as follows :

(Take no thought) from morning until even nor from evening until morning, either for your food what ye shall eat or for your raiment what ye shall put on. Ye are far better than the lilies which grow but spin not. Having one garment, what do ye (lack ?) . . . Who could add to your stature ? He himself will give you your garment. His disciples say unto him, When wilt thou be manifest to us, and when shall we see thee ? He saith, When ye shall be stripped and not be ashamed. . . .

. . . He said, The key of knowledge ye hid ; ye entered not in yourselves, and to them that were entering in ye opened not.

Probably the general impression made on the mind of the reader familiar with the Gospels will be that in the earlier part of the quotation we have the Sermon on the Mount with the edge off, so to speak ; and that in the later part we have again the evidence of the gradual complication and clouding of the freshness of the teaching of Jesus during the process of transmission.

The same evidence of increasing complexity, and consequent loss of pointedness and of freshness in comparison with the canonical Gospels, characterises the otherwise very remarkable fragment of a Gospel published from Oxyrhynchus in 1908. The passage, which is notably free from breaks, runs as follows :

. . . before he does wrong makes all manner of subtle excuse. But give heed lest ye also suffer the same

things as they ; for the evil-doers among men receive their reward not among the living only, but also await punishment and much torment. And he took them and brought them into the very place of purification, and was walking in the temple. And a certain Pharisee, a chief priest, whose name was Levi, met them, and said to the Saviour : Who gave thee leave to walk in this place of purification and to see these holy vessels, when thou hast not washed nor yet have thy disciples bathed their feet ? But defiled thou hast walked in this temple, which is a pure place, wherein no other man walks except he has washed himself and changed his garments, neither does he venture to see these holy vessels. And the Saviour straightway stood still with his disciples and answered him, Art thou then, being here in the temple, clean ? He saith unto him, I am clean ; for I washed in the pool of David, and having descended by one staircase I ascended by another, and I put on white and clean garments, and then I came and looked upon these holy vessels. The Saviour answered and said unto him, Woe, ye blind, who see not. Thou hast washed in these running waters wherein dogs and swine have been cast night and day, and hast cleansed and wiped the outside skin which also the harlots and flute-girls anoint and wash and wipe and beautify for the lust of men ; but within they are full of scorpions and all wickedness. But I and my disciples, who thou sayest have not bathed, have been dipped in the waters of eternal life which come from. . . . But woe unto the . . .

Here again we have thoughts which are plainly in line with the general thought of Jesus, but which have lost all the point and freshness which once marked them when they fell from His lips, by reason of the verbosity with which the later transmitter of them deemed it necessary to adorn

them. Yet this passage, with the others, has its own wonderful interest as showing the character of that mass of traditional lore about the life and words of our Saviour which was current during the early Christian centuries, and formed, no doubt, a very useful supplement to the simpler narrative of the canonical Gospels, and a far from despicable aid to the formation of a picture of Jesus.

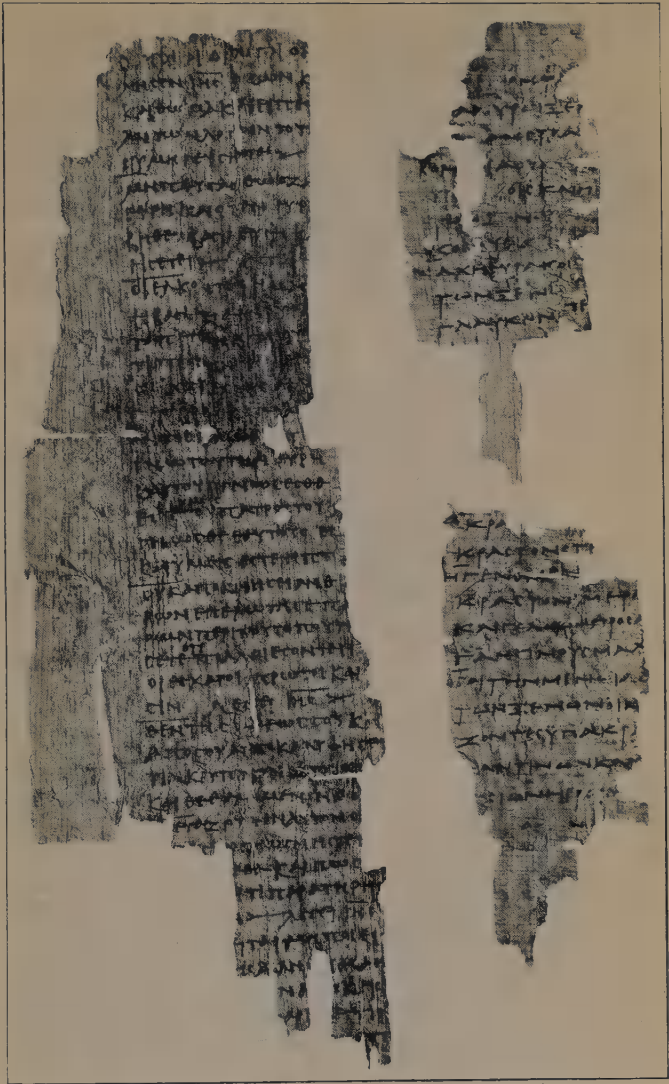
Almost as remarkable in interest as the theological fragments, but differing widely from them in the nature of their appeal, are the literary texts which have been found. Reference has already been made to the gain which classical scholarship has made from the rubbish-heaps of ancient Egypt by the discovery of portions of the works of authors who had previously been only names in a classical dictionary. Of these perhaps the most conspicuous is the orator Hyperides, the contemporary and rival of Demosthenes, whose six extant speeches we owe entirely to Egypt. In history, the main gains have been the Aristotelian treatise on the constitution of Athens, which was given to the public in 1891, and the Oxyrhynchus find of the *Hellenica*, a piece of work by a lost Greek historian of the first rank, dealing with the events of Greek history in the years 396 and 395 B.C. This great find, which, with the exception of the great manuscript of Plato's *Symposium*, is the largest literary text found at Oxyrhynchus, has been assigned to three different Greek historians by scholars—Ephorus, Theopompus, and Cratippus. It is written, like the second set of Logia, on the

verso of a land-survey list giving a long roll of cultivators.

In poetry, the largest gains are the manuscripts of Bacchylides, and that of the *Pæans* of Pindar. A short quotation will show something of the style of the *Pæans*; it is from VI, "For the Delphians to Pytho."

By Zeus of Olympus I pray thee, golden Pytho, famed for prophecy, and ye Graces and Aphrodite, to receive me at the sacred season, the spokesman of the tuneful Pierides. For I hear that there are wanting men to dance to the music of the Castalian fount by the brazen-gated stream, and am therefore come relieving thy townsmen's need, and furthering mine own honour. I have obeyed my heart as a child his kind mother, and gone down to Apollo's grove, the home of garlands and festivity, where oft by the shady pivot of earth the maidens of Delphi beat the ground with nimble foot as they sing of the son of Leto. . . .

And when they had placed in the sore-lamented tomb the mighty corse of the son of Peleus, went messengers over the sea-waves, and came again bringing from Scyros Neoptolemus, great in strength, who sacked the city of Ilium. Yet saw he not thereafter his kind mother, nor roused he forth in the fields of his fathers the horses of the Myrmidons, a brass-accoutred host. He reached the Molossian land hard by Tomarus; but he escaped not the winds nor the far-darter with the broad quiver. For the god swore that he who killed aged Priam when he had sprung upon the altar in the court should come to no comfortable path in life, nor reach old age; and he slew him, as he strove with the attendants about their allotted rights, in his beloved enclosure by the broad pivot of the earth. Oh hail, hail! Now for the pæan in full measure! Oh hail, ye youths!



XXVIII. THE LOGIA OF JESUS, SECOND SERIES (LEFT). HISTORICAL FRAGMENT (RIGHT).



Pindar strikes one as somewhat stiff and official ; but surely the same cannot be said of the delightful fragments of Sappho and Alcman. They are small, it is true, and only give us a little where we would fain have had a great deal ; still, as Dr. Hunt says, " Sappho is Sappho," and he does not praise the fragments too highly when he speaks of " the simple directness, the apparently effortless felicity, characteristic of the poetess." Here is a fragment of a poem expressing regret for an absent friend :

Some say that the fairest thing on the black earth is a host of horsemen, others of foot, others of ships ; but I say that is fairest which is the object of one's desire. And it is quite easy to make this plain to all ; for Helen, observing well the beauty of men, judged the best to be that one who destroyed the whole glory of Troy, nor bethought herself at all of child or parents dear, but through love Cypris led her astray. (Verily the wills of mortals are easily bent when they are moved by vain thoughts.) And I now have called to mind Anactoria, far away, whose gracious step and radiant glance I would rather see than the charge of the Lydians and the charge of accoutred knights. But we know well that this cannot come to pass among men.

Even more graceful is the appeal of the poetess for her estranged brother Charaxus, which Messrs. Grenfell and Hunt give us in what they modestly term " a rather literal verse translation " :

Sweet Nereids, grant to me
That home unscathed my brother may return,
And every end, for which his soul shall yearn,
Accomplished see !

And thou, immortal Queen,
 Blot out the past, that thus his friends may know
 Joy, shame his foes,—nay rather, let no foe
 By us be seen!

And may he have the will
 To me his sister some regard to show,
 To assuage the pain he brought, whose cruel blow
 My soul did kill,

Yea, mine, for that ill name
 Whose biting edge, to shun the festal throng
 Compelling, ceased awhile; yet back ere long
 To goad us came.

One could spare a good deal of more serious
 stuff to get a little more of Sappho on these terms.

Nor does the tiny scrap of Alcman show
 unworthy of such company:

We came to great Demeter's fane, we nine,
 All maidens, all in goodly raiment clad:
 In goodly raiment clad, with necklets bright
 Of carven ivory, that shone like snow.

Anything more simple could scarcely be;
 yet it is as lifelike as the procession of maidens
 on the Parthenon Frieze.

At the other end of the scale comes such a
 piece as the Lament for a pet, a dirge apparently,
 for a fighting-cock, which sounds like an ill-
 favoured mockery of the lament for Lesbia's
 sparrow:

. . . I am at a loss where to go. My ship is
 shattered. I weep for the loss of my sweet bird. Come,
 let me take the chick he nurtures (?), he, my warrior, my
 beauty, my Greek cock. For his sake was I called great
 in my life, and deemed happy, comrades, in my breeding

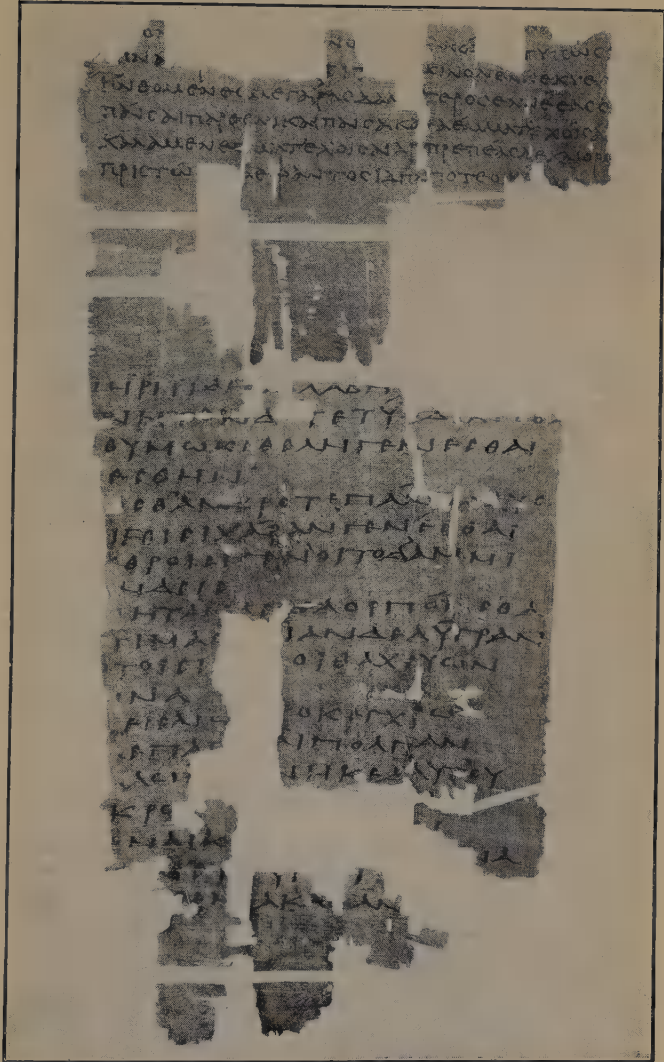
cares. I am distraught, for my cock has failed me ; he fell in love with Thacathalpas (?), and has deserted me. But I shall find rest, having set a stone upon my heart ; so fare ye well, my friends.

Callimachus, popular and prolific poet though he was, is known to most people chiefly by his ill-natured comment on the Cretans, quoted by St. Paul in the Epistle to Titus, "The Cretans are alway liars, evil beasts, idle gluttons." He comes to the front among the papyri with a fairly long fragment of the famous love-story of Acontius and Cydippe which was known to us before from the elegant version of Aristænetus. The new fragment enables us to see how great was the debt of Aristænetus to the poet, of whose verse his prose is frequently an echo, and lets us see that the Acontius and Cydippe letters of Ovid have comparatively little relation to the original story.

One of the most remarkable documents which have survived from the time of the Roman rule in Egypt is the extraordinary narrative, written on the *verso* of a piece of papyrus which on the *recto* contains four columns of a list of contracts deposited in the archives of Oxyrhynchus. The writing seems to date it in the second century, probably late in the century. Unfortunately, the beginning and end of the papyrus, as usual, are wanting, so that we are left in the dark as to the personality of the Roman Emperor concerned ; but there can be little doubt, from all the circumstances, and from the dignified patience displayed by the Emperor in the face of great provocation, that we are dealing with no less a man than Marcus Aurelius. When

the broken papyrus begins its story, we are in the presence of the Emperor, at Rome. Before him stands a certain Appianus, a magistrate and envoy of the Alexandrians, who is under sentence of death, and is about to be led away to immediate execution. With the Emperor are one of the consuls, and certain members of the Senate. Who the Appianus in question may have been is not clear. The famous historian, Appian, was an Alexandrian, held high office in Egypt, and lived on into the reign of Marcus Aurelius; but his known character makes it impossible to identify him with the blustering rebel, who alternately insults the Emperor, and whines for mercy. The Appianus of the papyrus may have been concerned with the rebellion of Avidius Cassius, who, as we know from other sources, had been endeavouring to stir up disloyalty at Rome. Possibly Cassius had sent him, along with the others whom he mentions as having already suffered death, to plot at Rome against the Emperor. The connected part of this most vivid piece of narration runs thus :

As he (the Emperor) was saying this, Appianus turned round, and seeing Heliodorus said, " Heliodorus, when I am being led off to execution, do you not speak ? " Heliodorus : " And to whom can I speak, when I have no one to listen to me ? Onward, my son, to death ; it is a glory for you to die for your beloved country. Be not distressed. . . ." The Emperor recalled Appianus, and said, " Now, do you know whom you are addressing ? " Appianus : " I know very well : I, Appianus, am addressing a tyrant." The Emperor : " No, a King." Appianus : " Say not so ! The deified Antonius, your



XXIX. FRAGMENT OF SAPPHO.
 (Fragments of six lines of Alcman above.)

father, deserved imperial power. Listen ; in the first place he was a lover of wisdom, secondly he was no lover of gain, thirdly he was a lover of virtue. You have the opposite qualities to these ; you are a tyrant, a hater of virtue, and a boor." Cæsar ordered him to be led away. Appianus as he was being led off said, " Grant me this one favour, lord Cæsar." The Emperor : " What ? " Appianus : " Order that I may wear the insignia of my nobility on my way." The Emperor : " Take them." Appianus took up his band, placed it on his head, and put his white shoes on his feet, and cried out in the midst of Rome, " Run hither, Romans, and behold one led off to death who is a gymnasiarch and envoy of the Alexandrians." The veteran (who was accompanying Appianus) ran and told his lord, saying, " Lord, while you are sitting in judgement, the Romans are murmuring." The Emperor : " At what ? " The Consul : " At the execution of the Alexandrian." The Emperor : " Let him be sent for." When Appianus entered he said, " Who has recalled me, when I was now saluting my second death, and those who have died before me, Theon, Isidorus, and Lampon ? Was it the Senate, or you the arch-pirate ? " The Emperor : " We too are accustomed to bring to their senses those who are mad or beside themselves. You speak only so long as I allow you to speak." Appianus : " I swear by your prosperity, I am neither mad nor beside myself, but I appeal on behalf of my nobility and of my rights." The Emperor : " How so ? " Appianus : " Because I am a noble and a gymnasiarch." The Emperor : " Do you then mean that we are ignoble ? " Appianus : " As to that I do not know ; but I appeal on behalf of my nobility and my rights." The Emperor : " Do you not now know that we are noble ? " Appianus : " On this point, if you are really ignorant, I will instruct you. In the first place Cæsar saved Cleopatra's life when he conquered her kingdom, and, as some say. . . ."

The chief points of interest in this amazing piece of old Roman politics are the extraordinary patience and tolerance of the great Emperor, who, however, was apparently not sufficiently acquainted with the amiable ways of self-styled patriots, to know their insatiable thirst for creating a sensation, their lack of appreciation of generosity on the part of their opponents, and, most of all, their intolerable prolixity. Appianus is the sham patriot as he has manifested himself down through all the ages. The one consolation which is left us by the fragment is that in all probability his insufferable long-windedness did what his insolence could not do, and that his long harangue on the edifying subject of the relations between Julius Cæsar and Cleopatra was cut short by the order of the exasperated Emperor that the sentence of death should be executed before the criminal could say another word. Altogether, the little piece is a wonderful glimpse behind the scenes of Imperial Rome, making the past live again before us, as the professed historians so seldom do, and underlining the old lesson that even an Emperor must sometimes wish that he was merely a commoner for five minutes, and could treat insult as Royalty cannot. Perhaps the most delicious touch in the whole story is the answer of Heliodorus to the appeal of Appianus. Heliodorus had obviously one of the characteristics of sham patriotism as clearly marked as Appianus had the others, and had not the least objection to see other men winning the crown of martyrdom, so long as he himself was not asked

to share in their glory. His "Onward, my son, to death, it is a glory for you to die for your beloved country. Be not distressed!" is a touch that we could by no means spare from the picture. Only one wonders what Appianus, who plainly held the rational belief that execution was no better than it was called, thought of his friend's economical heroics!

Among the papyri which may fairly be called literary, not because of any quality of their own, but because of the information which they give us on points of importance with regard to Greek literature, must be placed the fragment measuring 18 centimetres by 9.5, and bearing part of a list of victors at the Olympic games, which was found at the wonderful storehouse of Oxyrhynchus. The list covers the years 480-468 B.C., and 456-448 B.C., and for each year it gives the victors in thirteen events, seven contests for men, four for lads, and two horse races, and the events are always given in the same order, the chariots coming last. The literary quality of such a list is not obvious; but in actual fact the scrap of papyrus settles several points of dispute in Greek literary and artistic history. Thus, the dates of three of the odes of Pindar are found to have been wrongly fixed, and can now be settled definitely, while the settlement of the dates of the three Olympic victories of Hieron of Syracuse carries with it the settlement of the dates of the first Olympian Ode of Pindar, and the fifth Ode of Bacchylides. The life of the latter poet, so far as our knowledge of him goes, is extended by no less than sixteen years. Previously the

latest definitely known year of his was 468 B.C. ; now we know that the victory of Lachon, which Bacchylides celebrated in two odes, dates from 452, so that the poet must have been living in that year. When we turn to Greek sculpture, this little list again alters to some extent our view of the period of some of the great masters. Polycleitus of Argos, and Pythagoras of Rhegium, are both shown to have been flourishing in the middle of the fifth century B.C. ; which puts the former rather earlier, and the latter rather later, than was formerly held ; and this in turn affects the date of Myron, whom we know to have been a rival of Pythagoras, and a fellow-student of Polycleitus. In addition, the authorship of several statues whose pedestals have been discovered at Olympia can now be definitely assigned to the elder Polycleitus, instead of to the younger, to whom they were formerly given on account of the style of their inscriptions. Lastly, the Olympian boxer, Anthropos, whom Aristotle mentions in a well-known passage of the *Nicomachæan Ethics*, and whom the ancient commentators duly accepted as being an actual person, has been for long rejected by modern critics, who assumed that his name, "Man" was merely a general term, and not a proper name at all. Now the old boxer rises out of the rubbish-heaps of Oxyrhynchus to confound the critics, and to prove that in his day he was very much of a man indeed. Such a summary of the results which have followed upon the finding of this ragged scrap of papyrus may bring home to the mind the real importance of such things.

Thus, then, we see that the waste-paper baskets of a few old Egyptian towns have given back to us considerable portions of several of the plays of some of the greatest Greek tragedians, portions of several of the comedies of Menander, and portions of the works of quite a number of the most famous Greek poets, together with several important commentaries on literary works, and historical fragments of great value. Besides this, the manuscripts of portions of works already extant have furnished us with a most valuable means for checking and estimating the work of the critics, both ancient and modern, who have dealt with such works ; for these versions of the papyri are earlier than any of those with which the critics have concerned themselves. The question naturally suggests itself : How does criticism come out of such a searching and unexpected test ? On the whole, criticism is entitled to be fairly well pleased with itself, and to congratulate itself on coming off so well. Here and there, of course, the new evidence shows that the critics have slipped, or have been in rather too great a hurry to assume the impossibility of certain points. The Olympian boxer is a standing warning that the improbable and the impossible are by no means the same thing.

But in the main what the new evidence teaches is that, taken as a whole, the classical texts on which scholarship has been founding are remarkably dependable. There were no conspicuous deteriorations between the time when these papyrus versions were written and that of the manuscripts on which our previous knowledge

was based. Further, where modern scholarship has tried to emend corrupt or doubtful texts, it has on the whole been justified. Dr. Hunt instances the fact that in one fragment of the eleventh book of Polybius, in the space of about 130 short and incomplete lines, no fewer than thirteen of the emendations which modern scholarship had suggested on the extant text are shown to be right. Another lesson which the papyri teach us in this respect is that it is not safe to pin one's faith to any one manuscript or group of manuscripts. No manuscript has the monopoly of accuracy, and the papyri are quite impartial, supporting now the readings of one manuscript, sometimes those of another.

The last of all the lessons which the literary aspect of papyrus-discovery teaches us has been already referred to. It is a lesson of humility. Our century looks down with infinite scorn even upon its predecessor, to say nothing of such benighted times as those which are represented by the papyri. Well, the Egyptianised Greek, and the Græcised Egyptian have quite unwittingly left us the material from which we may judge their intellectual standing; and we know pretty well what would be the average contribution in a similar kind from an ordinary town of to-day, if any of our paper were capable of surviving for two thousand years or so. Would it be too much to say that the benighted Greek or Egyptian was in average of intellectual culture out of sight a better man than the average Briton of to-day? Anyhow it is the truth.

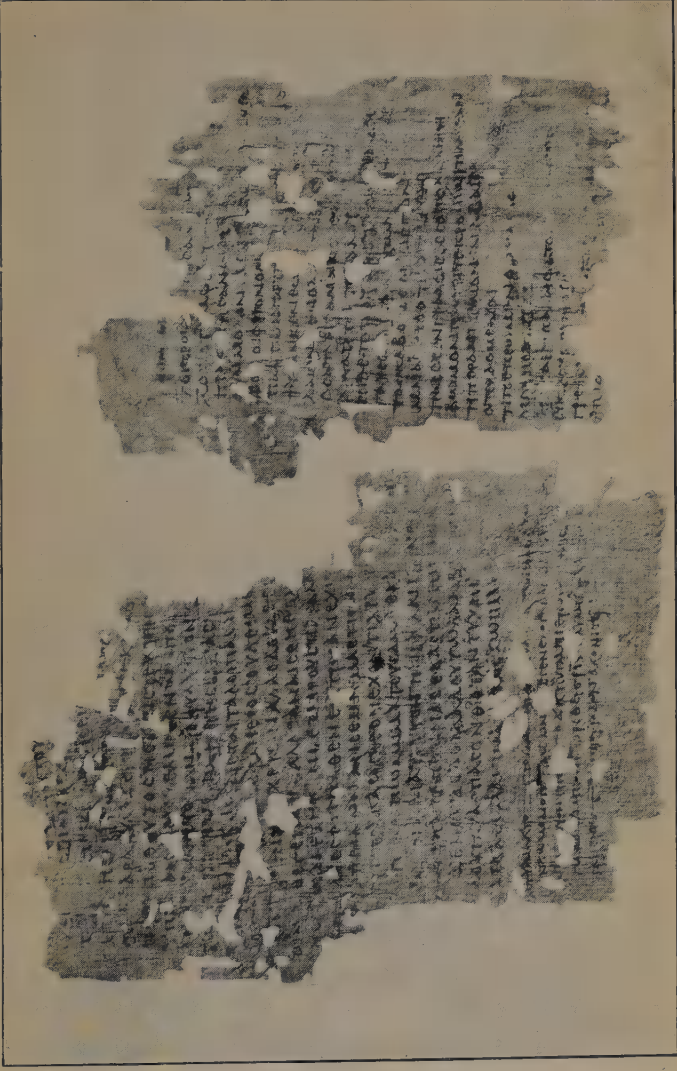
CHAPTER XIII

OFFICIAL, LEGAL, AND PERSONAL DOCUMENTS AND LETTERS

WHILE the theological and literary papyri are of supreme value and interest to the scholar, and are not without their interest even for the general reader, there can be no question that the greatest interest of the finds attaches to the more casual documents, if one may call them so, which give us the picture of the ordinary life of the average human being in town or country in Egypt, during the centuries to which the papyri relate. These are, of course, almost infinite in their variety; and through them you get human life sketched out for your entertainment and instruction from all sorts of angles. Now it will be a set of official returns about the quantity of un-irrigated land, or the state of the crops, or the number of men who are working on the banks of the irrigation-canals in a particular district; now it will be instructions from a superior official to an inferior as to certain duties which he is to perform; now it will be a petition from one villager against another, who has been wronging him or has assaulted him—not an uncommon thing, if one may judge from

the frequency with which it is mentioned in the papyri. Then, for a change, one gets a full-length marriage-contract, and can see the actual terms in which man and wife pledged their faith to one another, and what elaborate precautions were taken to secure that neither wronged the other; or perhaps the business never reaches the marriage-contract stage, and an indignant notice from the lady's father informs the intending bridegroom that owing to his scandalous behaviour the engagement is broken off. Or perhaps we get a picture of domestic felicity in the married state, and hear on one side a husband's complaint against his wife, or on the other a wife's complaint against her husband. One brief order sends an official off to make a report on the body of a man who has hanged himself; and another requests that someone be sent to make a kind of fatal accident inquiry on the body of a slave who fell out of the window of his master's house while craning his neck to get a glimpse of a couple of dancing-girls.

Then come personal letters in great number, and with all the freshness and unstudied interest of documents which were never destined for the public eye, and which therefore say just exactly what their writers meant—letters from the husband at Alexandria to his wife at home, telling her what to do with the baby when it is born, or from the spoiled boy at home to his father who has gone to Alexandria without him; letters from the anxious mother who has heard that her dear son has met with an accident, and who cannot rest satisfied until she has heard from



XXX. FRAGMENTS OF MENANDER (LEFT), AND PINDAR (RIGHT).



himself about it, or from the prodigal son to his mother, confessing all his shortcomings, and asking to be forgiven. Or again, it may be a letter from the young hopeful who has enlisted in one of the Roman legions, telling his father about the voyage to Italy, and giving his new military name, and sending on his portrait, in full uniform no doubt, just as if he were Mr. Atkins sending home a picture postcard of himself to the old folks; and at the other end of the scale, the whining creature who complains to his mother that when his father came to see him at camp he left him nothing, and he an old soldier himself too, and begs for all sorts of things.

Again, you come across a whole batch of badly spelled and ungrammatical letters from the old Roman soldier, now the colonist and keen farmer, Lucius Bellenus Gemellus, who couldn't spell, nor put a decent sentence together, but who knew very well how to look after a farm, and to keep his "own Epagathus," and all his other relatives and subordinates up to the mark. Now he is complaining that his pigs have been overdriven on the way to market, another time that the forage which his shepherd has bought is no better than dung, or that the irrigation is not being attended to as it should be. The old warrior keeps it up till he is seventy-seven years old, and his last letter, though very shaky and almost illegible, is as full of keenness and bad grammar as his first. Another dip into the old letter-bag, and you hear the gentleman who wants his friend to send down some drugs, and warns him that he needn't think to palm off his stale

stuff. The drugs must be fresh or he will hear of it. Or you chance upon the plaintive remonstrance of the man who has been left with the corpse of his dead friend on his hands, while the two brothers of the dead man have only come down to carry off his belongings, and have not even stayed to see the funeral, far less pay for it. You can scarcely put your hand into the bag without fishing out something quaint, or pathetic, or perhaps only sordid. The whole many-coloured pattern of human life so many centuries ago unrolls itself before you as you read, and you realise, as formal history would never teach you, that the men and women of two thousand years ago were of the same flesh and blood with ourselves, and that all the great changes which have come between have not affected the essential man, who was then very much what he is now, 'ower bad for blessing, and ower guid for banning, like Rob Roy.'

The best way to show a little of the variety and interest of this quaint kaleidoscope of human life, will be to give samples of its various aspects, in which the actors or writers shall speak for themselves. First of all, let us have a glimpse at the life and work of a minor official in a little Egyptian village. His story, such as it is, is one of those which emerged in so curious a fashion out of the belly of a crocodile. When we first come across him, Menches is applying for the post of "Komogrammateus" in the village of Kerkeosiris. His long name simply means "village-scribe," and one may figure a kind of parish council clerk, only the Komogrammateus

had duties much more extensive than his modern successor, and possessed apparently much more power of initiative. He "was the person ultimately responsible for the supply of all the various items of information required by the Central Government: it was he who drew up lists of the inhabitants of the village, their several holdings of land, the extent to, and manner in, which each holding was cultivated; and generally gave all particulars necessary for the assessment of the taxes upon each individual. In connection with this duty, he had also to supply the names of men suitable to be appointed to the liturgies (public services) of the village." You may judge whether such an official was likely to be popular or not; but no doubt there were pickings which made the post worth while; for in the year 119 B.C., Menches, who has had experience of the job before, applies to be reappointed in the following terms:

From Menches, komogrammateus of Kerkeosiris. On being appointed to the post of komogrammateus previously held by me I will pay at the village 50 artabæ of wheat and 50 artabæ of pulse, namely 20 artabæ of lentils, 10 of bruised beans, 10 of peas, 6 of mixed seeds, 3 of mustard, 1 of parched pulse, total 50; total 100 artabæ. The 51st year, Pachons 6. And Dorion will pay 50 artabæ of wheat, and 10 of pulse, namely 3 of bruised beans, 3 of peas, 3 of mixed seeds, 1 of mustard, total 10: total 60.

Now about this little document, where the clerk pays, or seems to pay, for the privilege of serving his village, it should be noticed that it

bears no name of anyone to whom it is addressed. In fact the whole business is a shady transaction of a kind to which a stop had to be put later by royal decree, and Menches mentions no one but himself and Dorion, so that the parish council, so to speak, should not be compromised. Practically, he bribes the council to continue him in his post. Nor is this all. Dorion, who figures as supplementing the offer of Menches, is evidently an under-official on whom Menches can put the screw ; for a little later, when the desired appointment has been made, we find from another document in the case that poor Dorion paid not only his own share of what was promised, but the whole amount. No doubt he found his own account in the business, and if Menches squeezed him, he might be relied on to look the other way when Dorion in his turn was squeezing someone else of lower standing. In the same year we have intimation of the worthy clerk's reappointment, and he held office in this second term for nine years. Whether his position was a bed of roses or not, let us see. His first two reports which survive tell us that he had had to arrest some folks, who had been at the ancient Egyptian crime, repudiated in the Negative Confession, of "cutting a cutting in a canal of running water," and his next states that in respect of a certain gentleman of Kerkeosiris, who is accused of murder and other offences, he has given the accused, who evidently is going about at large, notice to appear in three days at the court, to answer the charges against him. Plainly things went on pretty free-and-easy lines,

when a man accused of murder went about his village without let or hindrance, and could be relied on to present himself to take his trial on a simple notice from the clerk !

Ere long, things begin to become lively in Kerkeosiris, and we have Menches reporting to Horus, his superior official, probably the Royal Scribe, who was secretary to the Strategos, or Governor of the nome, on an assault which had been made upon one of the minor officials, the overseer of the village.

To Horus, greeting. On the first of the current month at about the eleventh hour a disturbance occurred in the village, and on running out we found a crowd of the villagers who had come to the assistance of Polemon, who is performing the duties of overseer of the village. When we inquired into the matter they informed us that Apollodorus and his son Maron had assaulted Polemon ; that Apollodorus had escaped, but Maron had been put in prison ; and that the latter had appeared before Ptolemæus the King's cousin and Strategos on the 1st. (It almost looks as though Menches had not been quite so prompt in running out as he suggests.) We thought it well to notify the matter for your information. Good-bye. The 3rd year, Mesore 2.

Strategos or no strategos, however, Apollodorus and his promising son were evidently determined to make things hot for the unlucky overseer of the village, and a little later in the same month we find Menches reporting as follows :

Menches, komogrammateus of Kerkeosiris, to Horus, greeting. I reported to you in another letter on the 3rd

of the current month the case of Polemon who is performing the duties of overseer of the village, how he was grossly insulted by Apollodorus and his son. These persons, persisting in their violent behaviour, on the . . . of the same month Mesore broke into the house of Petesuchus the son of Polemon the overseer, armed with a sword, and carried off eight drachmæ of silver; regarding which Petesuchus has handed in the following statement. Therefore I thought it well to report the matter for your information.

Horus, like a good official, hands the business on to someone else, with his docket. "To whom it concerns. See that they are made to appear and receive suitable punishment."

So far Menches has done his best for poor Polemon, who appears, in fact, to have been the worthy clerk's own brother. It is now the turn of Polemon to warn his brother and supporter of approaching danger. Inspectors have always been the bugbear of diligent and not so diligent officials, whose accounts are perhaps a little obscure; and Kerkeosiris is threatened with a visit from an Inspector of the Public Treasury. But the grateful Polemon has got wind of the danger, and here is his warning to his brother:

Polemon to Menches, greeting. As it is decided that the inspector of the Treasury should proceed at daybreak on the 15th to Berenicis, and on the 16th pass by the village on the way to Theognis, endeavour to have all arrears from the neighbourhood in order, so that you may not detain him and thus incur no little expense. Good-bye. The 3rd year, Pauni 11.

Nothing corrupt, you see, just a friendly five

days' warning to have accounts square when authority comes round. Polemon's letter, however, does not stand alone ; nor do all the others of a similar kind read as innocently as his. Here is another also from the Tebtunis Papyri. Its date is 116 years later than Polemon's ; but things have not changed much in the interval, unless for the worse, in the morals of the local officials.

You must know that an inspector of finance in the temples has arrived and intends to go to your division also. Do not be disturbed on this account, as I will get you off. So if you have time, write up your books and come to me ; for he is a very stern fellow. If anything detains you, send them on to me, and I will see you through, as he has become my friend. If you are in any difficulty about expense and at present have no funds, write to me, and I will get you off now as I did at first. I am making haste to write to you in order that you may not put in an appearance yourself ; for I will make him let you through before he comes to you. He has instructions to send recalcitrants under guard to the high-priest.

A friend worth having indeed, especially if your balance-sheet was not quite so clean as it might be. The picture of the stern fellow who had orders to send defaulters under guard to the High-Priest, and could yet be twisted so readily round the finger of the wily gentleman who knew his business, and could apply palm-oil in the right fashion, is a delightful piece of the immemorial Eastern official.

But to return to our friend the Clerk of Kerkeosiris, whose useful brother writes to him more than once in the same strain, sometimes

giving him advice as to how he ought to cook his accounts, "so as to make a good show." Shortly we find that poor Menches has been getting into hot water by reason of excessive zeal. He has interfered with Melas, who, unluckily for the clerk, is a dependant of Marres, his local superior, and the following official wiggling comes promptly from the indignant great man.

Marres to Menches, greeting. My kinsman, Melas, has appealed to me concerning an alleged injury from you obliging him to complain to Demetrius son of Niboitas. I am excessively vexed that he should gain no special consideration from you on my account, and should therefore have asked assistance from Demetrius; and I consider that you have acted badly in not having been careful that he should be independent of others owing to my superior rank. I shall therefore be glad if you will even now endeavour more earnestly to correct your behaviour towards him, abandoning your previous state of ignorance. If you have any grievance against him, apply together with him to me. Good-bye.

Menches' feelings when he read the letter may be imagined; nor does one fancy that he ever applied to Marres for justice against Melas. Marres evidently would not have had the least sympathy with those "kinless loons," Cromwell's Scottish judges; and he believed that there was small profit in being an official unless you could help your own kith and kin. Again the Oriental official as he was, is, and shall be. It is interesting to find that Marres himself gets a rap over the fingers from still more superior dignity before long, and has an accusation lodged against him on account of his armed and insolent extortions.



What came of the charge we do not know, but one would not be sorry, for the sake of Menches, to hear that his bully had got a dose of his own physic.

It would take too long to follow the worthy parish clerk through all his troubles with fraudulent evaders of the oil-tax, who meet the tax-collector with swords and cudgels instead of payment; with a stupid superior official who arrested the poor man, who had come to pay his respects to him, on a totally unfounded charge of poisoning a neighbour; or with the irrigators, who were always stealing water to which they had no right, and keeping it back from other people's fields, or maliciously flooding their neighbours' allotments at the wrong time, and so ruining their crops. We come to the last great worry of the good man's official career, so far as we know it. This trouble came, as no doubt a good deal of the trouble of the local officials came, from members of the class called Katoikoi, who were descendants of the Macedonian soldiers settled in Egypt by the Ptolemies, and who held their lands on a sort of feudal tenure, being liable for military service, and exempt from the poll-tax. One can imagine how such a privileged class, with all the swagger of the soldier among civilians, would be a perpetual thorn in the flesh of the local Dogberry, Verges and Co. Poor Menches comes up against the business in a particularly aggravated form as the following petitions to him show:

To Menches, komogrammateus of Kerkeosiris, from Demas son of Seuthes, cultivator of Crown land and

assistant for the cultivators in the said village. On the 8th of Mesore in the 4th year I was engaged with the said cultivators in the collection of sums owing for the leases of the same year, when Pyrrhichus son of Dionysius, a Katoicic cavalryman, and Heraclius, son of Posidippus, an inhabitant of the same village, proceeded thither with many other persons armed with swords. They went to my house and throwing off all restraint knocked down the street door, and having gained an entrance they carried off the articles mentioned below, though there was no dispute whatever between me and them. I therefore present to you this complaint in order that you may subscribe to my statements, and further forward a copy of the petition to the proper officials, so that the accused having been produced I may recover my property and they may receive the punishment which they deserve. Farewell.

Two doors of tamarisk-wood, a footstool, a hoe, 700 drachmæ of copper, and a bronze . . .

Follows another petition, almost in the same words, from Harmiusis, son of Serapion, and a third from several other cultivators, whose names are lost, all complaining of the violent deeds of the same Pyrrhichus and his companions, who indeed seem to have genuinely set out to "paint the town red," and to have had a special grudge against the Crown land farmers. In one of these petitions the articles stolen are almost the same as in the petition of Demas: "The list is: a door of tamarisk-wood, two hoes, and 200 drachmæ of copper." Pyrrhichus seems to have had a fancy for collecting doors and hoes, to say nothing of small change; but all was fish which came to his net, as the other petition, of Harmiusis, shows. His list is a more serious

business. "A woman's robe worth one talent 4000 drachmæ. A woman's sleeved tunic worth 4000 drachmæ. A jar containing 1600 drachmæ of copper."

Unfortunately, we have no means of tracing further the fortunes of this interesting case of robbery with violence, and we shall probably never know what became of the collection of doors which Pyrrhichus was so industriously gathering, and whether Mrs. Harmiusis, who seems to have gone fairly well dressed for a small farmer's wife, ever got back her best dress and her sleeved tunic. On the whole one imagines that it was unlikely. The Macedonian territorials were much more likely to hold on to their ill-gotten gains; and one can picture Menches prudently acting on Dogberry's advice: "Why then, take no note of him, but let him go; and presently call the rest of the watch together, and thank God you are rid of a knave."

Altogether, it is quite evident from Menches' waste-paper basket that the lot of a parish council clerk in Egypt in 119 B.C. had its exciting moments, and was not by any means a sinecure. It must have been a wearing job, and one is scarcely surprised to come across a petition from an unlucky doctor who had, greatly to his disgust, been appointed to a local position, in which he states, with a pathos which would move the heart of a stone:

After labouring for a period of four years at the post, I became very weak, my lord; wherefore I entreat you, my preserver, to have pity on me, and order me to be released from my duties so that I may be able to recover

from the effects of my labours . . . and . . . to add instructions that complete exemption from compulsory services be granted to persons practising the profession of physician, and especially to those who like myself have passed the examination, so that I may experience your clemency.

Menches, however, was evidently of tougher stuff than the doctor, and we may hope that he lasted long enough to earn his pension.

The work of the local official, nevertheless, was not all of this worrying character, and he had his festal moments when he enjoyed himself, or at least prepared joy for others. Thus the chairman of the parish council of Bacchias writes as follows to the local impresario. The date is A.D. 237:

To Aurelius Theon, provider of flute-girls, from Aurelius Asclas Philadelphus, president of the village council of Bacchias. I wish to hire from you T. sais the dancing-girl, along with one other, to perform for us in the aforesaid village for ten days from the 13th of the month Phaophi old style, they receiving by way of hire 36 drachmas daily, and by way of payment for the whole period three artabas of wheat and fifteen couples of delicacies, and for their conveyance down and back again three asses. And of this they have received . . . drachmas by way of earnest money to be reckoned by you in the price. The 3rd year of the Emperor Cæsar Gaius Julius Verus Maximinus Pius Felix Augustus Germanicus Maximus Dacicus Maximus Sarmaticus Maximus (and Gaius Julius Verus Maximus Germanicus (Maximus) Dacicus Maximus Sarmaticus (Maximus) the most noble Cæsar, the æonian Lords Augusti, Epeiph. . . .

“ T. sais the dancing-girl ” is evidently the

star performer, and the village of Bacchias is manifestly about to have a whirl of gaiety. Parish councils of to-day are humdrum affairs compared with those of the early days of the Roman Empire. While festivals are the order of the day, let us hear Demophon making his preparations for what is manifestly to be a great evening, quite regardless of expense, at his own house.

Demophon to Ptolemæus, greeting. Make every effort to send me the flute-player Petous with both the Phrygian flutes and the rest; and if any expense is necessary, pay it, and you shall recover it from me. Send me also Zenobius the dancer, with a drum and cymbals and castanets, for he is wanted by the women for the sacrifice; and let him wear as fine clothes as possible. Get the kid also from Aristion and send it to me; and if you have arrested the slave, deliver him to Semphtheus to bring to me. Send me as many cheeses as you can, a new jar, vegetables of all kinds, and some delicacies, if you have any. Good-bye. Put them on board with the guards who will assist in bringing the boat.

For the disastrous results of over-curiosity about such entertainments, we need only turn to the letter of Leonides Serenus of Seneptha to Hierax, the Strategos of the Oxyrhynchite nome, in A.D. 182, though the edge of the moral is a little blunted by the tender age of the poor victim.

To Hierax, Strategos, from Leonides also called Serenus, whose mother is stated as Tauris, of Seneptha. At a late hour of yesterday the 6th, while a festival was taking place at Seneptha, and the castanet-players were giving their customary performance at the house of Plution my son-in-law . . . his slave Epaphroditus, aged

about eight years, wishing to lean out from the bed-chamber of the said house to see the castanet-players, fell, and was killed. I therefore present this application and ask you, if it please you, to appoint one of your assistants to come to Senepta in order that the body of Epaphroditus may receive proper laying-out and burial.

The docket of Hierax is added to the letter :

Hierax, Strategos of the Oxyrhynchite nome, to Claudius Serenus, assistant. A copy of the application which has been presented to me by Leonides, also called Serenus, is herewith sent to you. Take a public physician and view the dead body referred to, and having delivered it over for burial, make a report in writing. Signed by me. The 23rd year of Marcus Aurelius Commodus Antoninus Cæsar the lord, Athur 7.

Perhaps the purest gem of all the official documents is the letter, evidently from a high official at Alexandria, to Asclepiades, superintendent of revenues in the Fayum, which is forwarded by Hermias, another local official, to Horus, the Royal Scribe of the Strategos, a gentleman whom we have met already in the correspondence of Menches, with instructions to see that its directions are carried out. It gives intimation of the approaching advent of a globe-trotting Roman Senator, who is about to visit the Fayum in order to see the sights ; and the directions, with their minute attention to such points as the providing of " Nuts unto the monkey, and buns unto the bear," so to speak, are delicious. Tourist-nature was evidently the same eighteen hundred years ago as it is now.

Hermias to Horus, greeting. Appended is a copy of

the letter to Asclepiades. Take care that action is taken in accordance with it. Good-bye. The 5th year, Xandicus 17, Mecheir 17.

To Asclepiades, Lucius Memmius, a Roman Senator, who occupies a position of great dignity and honour, is making the voyage from Alexandria to the Arsinoite nome to see the sights. Let him be received with the utmost magnificence, and take care that at the proper spots the guest-chambers be prepared, and the landing-stages to them be completed, and that the appointed gifts of hospitality be brought to him at the landing-place, and that the things for the furnishing of the guest-chamber, and customary tit-bits for Petesuchus and the crocodiles, and the necessaries for the view of the Labyrinth, and the offerings and sacrifices, be provided. In short, take the greatest pains in everything, that the visitor may thereby be well satisfied, and display the utmost zeal. . . .

The crocodiles whom Lucius Memmius was to feed with the official buns, were, of course, the sacred crocodiles of whom Herodotus and Strabo both tell us. "Those who dwell about Thebes, and Lake Moeris," says Herodotus, "consider them to be very sacred ; and they each of them train up a crocodile, which is taught to be quite tame ; and they put crystal and gold earrings into their ears, and bracelets on their fore-paws ; and they give them appointed and sacred food, and treat them as well as possible while alive, and when dead they embalm them, and bury them in sacred vaults." Let us hope that Lucius Memmius duly gaped at the crocodiles, and they at him, and that both parties were pleased with their entertainment. Before we pass away from the subject of tourists of ancient days, and their likeness to their brethren

of to-day, let us listen to a vandal of the first or second century of our era, who goes up the Nile, also to see the sights, and to desecrate them as though he were Brown, Jones, or Robinson of London or New York in the twentieth century.

Nearchus. Since many (go on journeys) and even (betake themselves) to a journey on board ship, in order that they may visit works of art made by hands, I have followed their example, and having undertaken the voyage up the stream have arrived at Syene (Aswan), and at the spot whence the Nile happens to flow out, and at Libya where Ammon chants his oracles to all men, and I have learned things of good omen, *and have engraved the names of my friends on the sanctuaries for perpetual remembrance.* The prayer. . . . To Heliodorus.

The words italicised may be commended to the modern representative of Nearchus, as a dignified way of stating the fact that he has scribbled his undistinguished name or those of his friends on monuments whose battered antiquity might teach him reverence; but the net result remains the same however it is expressed.

We turn now to the light which has been thrown by the papyri on the family life of these ancient days, the relations of husband and wife, of father and mother to their children, and of brothers to one another. The course of true love did not always run smooth in Egypt any more than elsewhere, and our first document shows us the polite and dignified way in which a father of the old school could tell his prospective son-in-law that he was a young scoundrel, and that the engagement had better be broken off.

Handwritten text, likely a report, on a heavily damaged and stained piece of paper. The text is illegible due to the extent of the damage and fading.

XXXII. REPORT OF A PUBLIC PHYSICIAN ON A MAN
FOUND HANGED.



. . . eleventh indiction. I John, father of Euphemia, my unemancipated daughter, do send this present deed of separation and dissolution to you, Phœbammon, my most honourable son-in-law, by the hand of the most illustrious advocate Anastasius of this city of Oxyrhynchus. It is as follows. Forasmuch as it has come to my ears that you are giving yourself over to lawless deeds, which are pleasing neither to God nor man, and are not fit to be put into writing, I think it well that the engagement between you and her, my daughter Euphemia, should be dissolved, seeing that, as aforesaid, you are giving yourself over to lawless deeds, and that I wish my daughter to lead a peaceful and quiet life. I therefore send you the present deed of dissolution of the engagement between you and her, my daughter Euphemia, by the hand of the most illustrious advocate aforesaid with my own signature, and I have taken a copy of this document written by the hand of the most illustrious advocate aforesaid. Wherefore for the security of the said Euphemia my daughter I send you this deed of separation and dissolution written on the 11th day of the month Epeiph in the 11th indiction.

I, John, the aforesaid, father of Euphemia, my daughter, send the present deed of separation and dissolution to you, Phœbammon, my most honourable son-in-law, as is above written.

It was not a very big job for "the most illustrious advocate Anastasius" (it was worth while being an advocate in those days); but he knew as well as any of his modern brethren how to spin out a deed and earn his six and eightpence. What the "most honourable son-in-law" felt when his matrimonial prospects were thus suddenly blighted, and whether he turned over a new leaf and married Euphemia after all, we do not know, and never shall. At all events the

young lady had a father who knew how to look after her interests, and could call a spade a spade, even if he did qualify it with several adjectives.

Phœbammon and Euphemia, of course, were exceptions; and the marriage contract of Philiscus and Apollonia will show us how the interests of man and wife were secured when they set up house together. The contract dates from 92 B.C., much earlier than the previous document.

The 22nd year, Mecheir 11. Philiscus, son of Apollonius, a Persian of the Epigone, acknowledges to Apollonia, also called Kellauthis, daughter of Heraclides, Persian, with her guardian her brother Apollonius, that he has received from her in copper money 2 talents 4000 drachmæ, the amount of the dowry for Apollonia agreed upon with him. . . . The keeper of the contract is Dionysius.

In the 22nd year of the reign of Ptolemy also called Alexander, the god Philometor, in the priesthood of the priest of Alexander and the rest as written in Alexandria, the 11th of the month Xandicus which is the 11th of Mecheir, at Kerkeosiris in the division of Polemon in the Arsinoite nome. Philiscus son of Apollonius, Persian of the Epigone, acknowledges to Apollonia also called Kellauthis, daughter of Heraclides, Persian, with her guardian her brother Apollonius, that he has received from her in copper money 2 talents 4000 drachmæ, the dowry for Apollonia agreed upon with him. Apollonia shall remain with Philiscus, obeying him as a wife should her husband, owning their property in common with him. Philiscus shall supply to Apollonia all necessaries and clothing and whatever is proper for a wedded wife, whether he is at home or abroad, so far as their property shall admit. It shall not be lawful for Philiscus to bring in any other wife but Apollonia, nor to keep a concubine

or lover, nor to beget children by another woman in Apollonia's lifetime, nor to live in another house over which Apollonia is not mistress, nor to eject or insult or ill-treat her, nor to alienate any of their property to Apollonia's disadvantage. If he is shown to be doing any of these things, or does not supply her with necessaries and clothing and the rest as has been said, Philiscus shall forfeit forthwith to Apollonia the dowry of 2 talents 4000 drachmæ of copper. In the same way it shall not be lawful for Apollonia to spend the night or day away from the house of Philiscus without Philiscus' consent, or to have intercourse with another man or to ruin the common household, or to bring shame upon Philiscus in anything that causes a husband shame. If Apollonia wishes of her own will to separate from Philiscus, Philiscus shall repay her the bare dowry within ten days from the day it is demanded back. If he does not repay it as has been stated, he shall forthwith forfeit the dowry he has received increased by one half. The witnesses are Dionysius, son of Patron, Dionysius, son of Hermaiscus, Theon, son of Ptolemæus, Didymus, son of Ptolemæus, Heracleus, son of Diocles, Dionysius, son of Dionysius, all six Macedonians of the Epigone; the keeper of the contract is Dionysius. (Signed) I, Philiscus, son of Apollonius, Persian of the Epigone, acknowledge the receipt of the dowry, the 2 talents 4000 drachmæ of copper, as above written, and I will act with regard to the dowry as. . . . I Dionysius, son of Hermaiscus, the aforesaid, wrote for him, as he was illiterate. I Dionysius, have received the contract, being valid. Registered the 22nd year, Mecheir 11.

So far as a contract could secure it, it seems as if the happiness of the married couple were fairly well secured, and in especial one may notice the care with which the rights of the woman are protected, and the freedom which is

given her, for any reason or none, and solely on her own will, to separate from her husband, taking her dowry with her.

That such protection was not altogether unnecessary is manifest from the following complaint of a deserted wife, which dates from A.D. 20-50.

To Heraclides, priest, chief justice, superintendent of the Chrematistæ and the other courts, from Syra, daughter of Theon. I married Sarapion, bringing him by cession a dowry amounting to 200 drachmæ of silver. As he was destitute of means I received him into my parent's house, and I for my part conducted myself blamelessly in all respects. But Sarapion having squandered my dowry as he pleased, continually ill-treated and insulted me, using violence towards me, and depriving me of the necessaries of life ; finally he deserted me, leaving me in a state of destitution. I therefore beg you to order him to be brought before you, in order that he may be compelled perforce to pay back my dowry increased by half its amount. This petition is without prejudice to any other claims which I have or may have against him.

Syra's claim is in accordance with the terms of the preceding marriage contract of Apollonia and Philiscus, and she was evidently acting upon good legal advice ; but one does not imagine that Heraclides succeeded in getting much of the dowry back from Sarapion, who was clearly a rogue in grain. There is an old Scottish proverb about taking his unmentionables off a Highlander, which applies to the case.

Of course, it is not always the husband who is to blame. Here is the bitter cry of a poor

husband who had been cursed with an extravagant wife.

To Alexander, strategos, from Tryphon, son of Dionysius, of the city of Oxyrhynchus. I married Demetrous, daughter of Heraclides, and I for my part provided for my wife in a manner that exceeded my resources. But she became dissatisfied with our union, and finally left the house, carrying off property belonging to me, a list of which is added below. I beg therefore, that she be brought before you in order that she may receive her deserts, and return to me my property. This petition is without prejudice to the other claims which I have or may have against her. The stolen articles are a . . . worth 40 drachmæ. . . .

What else Demetrous stole from her long-suffering husband we do not know; but by his own account he was well-rid of a bad bargain.

Perhaps the most deplorable, as it is certainly the quaintest, is the complaint, dating from the fourth century A.D., of a Christian woman against her husband, who evidently objected that she went too much to church, and made himself very unpleasant about it. The beginning of this tale of woe is lost, and when we begin to hear the good woman she is in the full tide of her narrative.

Concerning all the insults uttered by him against me. He shut up his own slaves and mine with my foster-daughters and his agent and son for seven whole days in his cellars, having insulted his slaves and my slave Zoe and half-killed them with blows, and he applied fire to my foster-daughters, having stripped them quite naked, which is contrary to the laws. He also said to the same foster-daughters: "Give up all that is hers," and they

said, "She has nothing with us"; and to the slaves when they were being beaten he said, "What did she take from my house?" and they under torture said, "She has taken nothing of yours, but all your property is safe." Zoilus went to see him because he had shut up his foster-son, and he said to him, "Have you come on account of your foster-son or of such a woman, to talk about her?" He swore in the presence of the bishops and of his own brothers, "Henceforth I will not hide all my keys from her (he trusted his slaves but would not trust me); I will stop and not insult her." Whereupon a marriage-deed was made, and after this agreement and his oaths he again hid the keys from me; and when I had gone out to the church at Sambatho he had the outside doors shut on me, saying, "Why did you go to the church?" and using many terms of abuse to my face, and through his nose. There were 190 artabæ of corn due to the State on my account, of which he paid nothing, not a single artaba. He obtained possession of the books and shut them up, saying, "Pay the price of the 100 artabæ," having himself paid nothing, as I stated before; and he said to his slaves, "Provide helpers, to shut her up also." Choous his assistant was carried off to prison, and Euthalamus gave security for him which was insufficient, so I took a little more, and gave it for the said Choous. When I met him at Antinoöpolis, having my bag with my ornaments, he said to me, "I shall take anything you have with you on account of the security you gave to my assistant Choous for his dues to the State." To all this his mother will bear witness. He also persisted in vexing my soul about my slave Anilla, both at Antinoöpolis and here, saying, "Send away this slave, for she knows how much she has possessed herself of," probably wanting to get me involved, and on this pretext to take away whatever I have myself. But I refused to send her away, and he kept saying, "A month hence I shall take a mistress." God knows this is true.

It is truly a moving tale, and it bears truth on the very face of it. You don't often get a more human touch than the aggravation of the insult by the husband speaking it through his nose. What wife could stand that? Plainly the gentleman, who is all the worse because he must have been a man of position and means, was a cruel and violent man, who ill-deserved a good wife; but one must admit in extenuation of his faults, and they are many, that his wife, with all her good qualities, does seem to have been very eloquent, not to say long-winded.

Fortunately, there were husbands and wives who got on better with one another than this good lady did with her provoking spouse. Aline, who wrote the following letter, for instance, is not in the least patriotic, when it comes to be a question of her husband's safety. He seems to have been serving at the time of the revolt of the Jews during the reign of the Emperor Hadrian, and his wife is a great deal more concerned for his welfare than for that of the Empire, as is only natural.

I am constantly sleepless (she writes), filled night and day with the one anxiety for your safety. Only my father's attentions kept my spirit up, and on New Year's Day I assure you that I should have gone to bed fasting but that my father came in and compelled me to eat. I implore you therefore to take care of yourself and not to face the danger without a guard; but just as the strategos here leaves the bulk of the work to the magistrates, you do the same.

This is indeed dreadful advice to give to a soldier, and one can imagine a higher type of wifely devotion still, which would have urged to duty instead of holding back from it; but at

least Aline loved her man in her own somewhat selfish way, and after the gentleman who scolded his wife through his nose such relations are refreshing. One hopes that Apollonius at least took a guard with him on dangerous jobs, and got safely back at last to his anxious wife.

And now, let us look for a little at the children and their relations with their parents. First of all, we have the famous letter of Hilarion at Alexandria to his wife Alis, at Oxyrhynchus. It is not a bad letter, given the standpoint of the times. Hilarion, who has evidently gone to Alexandria to seek work, leaving his wife expecting the birth of a child, writes in a kindly, loving tone enough, and his "How can I forget you?" strikes one as quite as genuine as many protestations of affection which sound much more affecting. The notable thing is just the standpoint of the times. Without the least sign of feeling that he is writing a cruel thing, this affectionate husband tells his wife that if the baby is a girl, it is to be cast out! Nor need we imagine that this is an exceptional case. Every reader of classical comedy will remember how often the plot turns on the identity of the heroine, who turns out to have been the child of a noble family, exposed at her birth, as Hilarion ordered his wife to expose her child, and wonderfully rescued. We have seen that the Egyptian and Greek of these centuries could teach us many things with regard to mental culture; let us acknowledge that there are some things which he did without a second thought, which to us have become frankly abominable and impossible.

Hilarion to Alis his sister (the Egyptian, of course, saw no reason for not marrying his sister, and as we have already seen, sister was the usual term for sweetheart), heartiest greetings, and to my dear Berous and Apollo-narion. Know that we are still even now in Alexandria. Do not worry if when all the others return I remain in Alexandria. I beg and beseech you to take care of the little child, and as soon as we receive wages I will send them to you. If—good luck to you!—you bear offspring, if it is a male, let it live ; if it is a female, expose it. You told Aphrodisias, “Do not forget me.” How can I forget you ? I beg you therefore not to worry.

The 29th year of Cæsar, Pauni 23. Hilarion to Alis, deliver.

No letter of these ancient times has been oftener quoted and commented upon than that of young Theon, the spoiled boy, to Theon the elder, his father ; but it is so delightful a piece of the unchangeable “soaring human boy” of all time, that it cannot be passed over. Theon senior had evidently never heard the old jingle which embodies the wisdom of Solomon on the subject of boy training, and is anathema to the modern child-trainer, whose results approximate more to Theon’s :

Solomon spoke in accents mild,
“Spare the rod, and spoil the child,”

and the rest of it.

Theon to Theon his father, greeting. You did a fine thing ! You have not taken me away along with you to the city ! If you refuse to take me along with you to Alexandria, I won’t write you a letter, or speak to you, or wish you health. And if you do go to Alexandria, I won’t take your hand, or greet you again henceforth. If

you refuse to take me, that's what's up ! And my mother said to Archelaus, " He upsets me : off with him ! " But you did a fine thing ! You sent me gifts, great ones, husks !! They deceived us there, on the 12th, when you sailed. Send for me then, I beseech you. If you do not send, I won't eat, I won't drink. There now ! I pray for your health. Tubi 18. Deliver to Theon from Theonas his son.

The writing of this gem of a letter is bad, and the grammar and spelling are just what you would expect from such a specimen of the spoiled boy. Theon junior is quite the up-to-date child in everything.

Whatever the boy was, his mother was much the same in the third century A.D. as she would be now, as the following letter of an anxious and illiterate mother to her married son, who is working away from home, shows. It is written on the *verso* of an old official document, which had been crossed out, cut up into small pieces, and sold—no doubt in a third-century fit of Government economy, which probably lasted as long as such things usually do.

His mother to . . . her son, greeting. At a late hour I went to Serapion . . ., and asked about your health and the health of your children. And he told me that you had a sore foot owing to a splinter. And I was troubled because you were only able to walk so slowly. And when I said to Serapion that I would go along with him to see you, he said to me, " There is nothing so much the matter with you." But if you yourself know that matters are still not going well with you, write to me, and I will come down, going with anyone I may find. Do not then forget, my child, to write me regarding your health, for you know

the anxiety (of a mother) for a child. Your children greet you. Aurelius . . . greets his father. Persuade Dionysius to greet the child.

Her grammar and her writing are no better than little Theon's; but they do not hide the artless love of the whole letter. "Thou shalt never forget what thy mother has done for thee," wrote a wise man of an Egypt much more ancient than this, "she bare thee, and nourished thee in all manner of ways. If thou forgettest her, she might blame thee, she might lift up her arms to God, and he would hear her complaint."

One is afraid that that is what Antonius Longus had been doing with regard to his mother Nilous, before he found the ways of transgressors so hard as he apparently had from his letter, which dates from the century before that which we have just read. This is really an Egyptian version of the story of the Prodigal Son, written from his point of view.

Antonius Longus to Nilous his mother, greeting. Continually I pray for your health. Supplication on your behalf I direct each day to the lord Serapis. I wish you to know that I had no hope that you would come up to the metropolis. On this account, neither did I enter into the city. But I was ashamed to come to Karanis, because I am going about in rags. I wrote you that I am naked. I beseech you, mother, be reconciled to me. But I know what I have brought upon myself. Punished I have been in any case. I know that I have sinned. I heard from Postumos, who met you in the Arsinoite nome, and unreasonably related all to you. Do you not know that I would rather be a cripple than be conscious that I am still owing anyone an obolus . . . come

yourself . . . I have heard that . . . I beseech you . . . I almost . . . I beseech you . . . I will . . . not . . . otherwise. . . . To . . . his mother, from Antonius Longus, her son.

It must have been such a son as Antonius, but without his tardy repentance, who was the occasion of the public notice which was issued in the Hermopolite nome in the first or second century A.D.

Copy of a public notice . . . to Heraclides, strategos of the Hermopolite nome, from Ammonius, elder, the son of Ermæus, and his former wife, A . . . the daughter of Areius, along with her present husband Callistratus, the son of A . . . inhabitants of Hermopolis. Since our son Castor, along with others, by riotous living has squandered all his own property, and now has laid hands on ours and desires to scatter it, on that account we are taking precautions lest he should deal despitefully with us, or do anything else amiss. . . . We beg, therefore, that a proclamation be set up (that no one any longer should lend him money).

Castor, apparently, did not come out of a united home, judging by the fact that his mother had been divorced and remarried, and perhaps this may account for some of his ill-doings. One imagines that proclamation or no proclamation he would find means of getting the accommodation he wanted; for money-lenders were no scarcer then than they are now, and, as the following sprightly epistle shows, the descendants of Jacob had, even in A.D. 41, an unsavoury reputation among borrowers, and were not to be recommended, even in times of dire distress.

Sarapion to our Heraclides, greeting. I sent you two other letters, one by the hand of Nedymus, one by the hand of Cronius the sword-bearer. Finally then I received from Arabs the letter, and I read it and was grieved. Stick to Ptollarion constantly ; perhaps he can set you free. Say to him : " I am not like anyone else, I am a lad ! With the exception of a talent, I have made you to pay my burdens. . . . I do not know . . . we have many creditors : do not drive us out." Ask him daily : perhaps he may have pity on you : if not, do you, like all, beware of the Jews. Rather stick to him (Ptollarion), and so you may become his friend. Notice that the document may be signed either by Diodorus or by the wife of the ruler. If you manage your own affairs, you are not to be blamed. Greet Diodorus with the others. Good-bye. Greet Harpocrates.

Sarapion does a good deal suggest Mr. Chuckster writing to Mr. Dick Swiveller, and advising him to make friends with Mr. Quilp ; and his faith in the softness of heart of Ptollarion, whom one may infer to have been the money-lender with whom " our Heraclides " had been dealing, is indeed touching. It does not seem obvious to us, why a money-lender should have his hard heart softened by being told that his young scapegrace of a client had made him pay all his burdens with the exception of a talent ; but perhaps money-lenders looked at things differently in those days, and preferred to be ruined by a steady customer than paid by a fickle one. Sarapion's wise comment that " if you manage your own affairs, you are not to be blamed," might suggest the obvious remark that it entirely depends on how you manage them, and

that the rest of the letter does not suggest that in this respect Heraclides had been a conspicuous success. But evidently hope sprang eternal in the breast of the Mr. Micawber of the first century, as it does still in that of his successor.

We are not to imagine, however, that all the young men who are introduced to us by the papyri are scapegraces of the type of Castor or Heraclides. Most parents would be quite content with a son like the young soldier who writes by military post from the camp of his legion in Italy to his father Epimachus, at Philadelphia in the Fayum.

Apion to Epimachus, his father and lord, heartiest greetings. First of all, I pray that you are in health, and continually prosper and fare well with my sister and her daughter and my brother. I thank the lord Serapis that when I was in danger at sea he saved me. Straightway when I entered Misenum I received my travelling-money from Cæsar, three gold pieces. And I am well. I beg you, therefore, my lord father, write me a few lines, first regarding your health, secondly regarding that of my brother and sister, thirdly that I may kiss your hand because you have brought me up well, and on this account I hope to be quickly promoted, if the gods will. Give many greetings to Capito, and to my brother and sister, and to Serenilla, and my friends. I send you a little portrait of myself at the hands of Euctemon. And my (military) name is Antonius Maximus. I pray for your good health.

Company Athenonike.

Serenus the son of Agathos Dæmon greets you . . . and Turbo the son of Gallonius and . . . To Philadelphia for Epimachus from his son Apion.

Give this to the (office of the) first cohort of the

Apamæans to Julianus . . . paymaster, from Apion, so that (he may forward it) to Epimachus his father.

As satisfactory a letter as a father could desire. One can picture the letter arriving at Philadelphia, and the "little portrait" of Apion in the uniform of the first cohort of the Apamæans, with the new military name, which a foreigner had to take when he entered the Roman service, written beneath it, being handed round for all the neighbours to admire; and one hopes that he soon got the promotion in Company Athenonike that he looked for on account of his good up-bringing.

Apion is a very different specimen from the young grouser who writes from camp to his mother, having apparently found the old soldier his father too well acquainted with the tricks of the trade to give in to him. His letter is one whine from beginning to end:

When my father came to me, he did not give me an obolus or a cloak or anything. All will laugh at me. "His father is a soldier," they will say, "and yet he gives him nothing." My father said, "When I get home, I will send you everything"; but he has sent me nothing. Why? The mother of Valerius sent him a pair of girdles and a jar of oil, and a basket of dainties and 200 drachmæ. Wherefore, I pray you, mother, send to me. . . . Do not leave me thus.

Two hundred drachmæ and a military cloak, so that he can be upsides with Valerius—nothing less will content this ill-conditioned young cub, who no doubt swaggered as much at home as he whined from camp.

Sometimes the young hope of the family turned his thoughts in more peaceful directions than the legions, and here is the contract of apprenticeship which bound young Thonis to the trade of weaving in the town of Oxyrhynchus in A.D. 182 :

Ischyriion son of Heradion and . . . of Oxyrhynchus, and Heraclas son of Sarapion also called Leon, son of Heraclides, his mother being . . . of the said city, weaver, agree with each other as follows : Ischyriion on the one part that he has apprenticed to Heraclas. . . Thonis, a minor, to be taught the art of weaving for a period of five years, starting from the first of next month, Phaophi, and will produce him to attend the teacher for the stipulated period every day from sunrise to sunset, performing all the orders that may be given to him by the said teacher on the same terms as the other apprentices, and being fed by Ischyriion. For the first two years and seven months of the third year Heraclas shall pay nothing for the boy's wages, but in the remaining five months of the said third year Heraclas shall pay for the wages of the said apprentice 12 drachmæ a month, and in the fourth year likewise for wages 16 drachmæ a month, and in the fifth year likewise 24 drachmæ a month ; and Heraclas shall furnish for the said apprentice in the present twenty-fourth year a tunic worth 16 drachmæ, and in the coming twenty-fifth year a second tunic worth 20 drachmæ, and likewise in the twenty-sixth year another tunic worth 24 drachmæ, and in the twenty-seventh year another tunic worth 28 drachmæ, and likewise in the twenty-eighth year another tunic worth 32 drachmæ. The boy shall have twenty holidays in the year on account of festivals without any deduction from his wages after the payment of wages begins ; but if he exceeds this number of days from idleness or ill-health or disobedience or any other reason, Ischyriion must produce him for the teacher during

an equivalent number of days, during which he shall remain and perform all his duties, as aforesaid, without wages, being fed by the said Ischyriion, because the contract has been made on these terms. Heraclas on the other part consents to all these provisions, and agrees to instruct the apprentice in the aforesaid art within the period of five years as thoroughly as he knows it himself, and to pay the monthly wages as above, beginning with the eighth month of the third year. Neither party is permitted to violate any of the aforesaid provisions, the penalty for such violation being a fine of 100 drachmæ to the party abiding by the contract, and to the Treasury an equal sum. This agreement is valid. The twenty-fourth year of the Emperor Cæsar Marcus Aurelius Commodus Antoninus Augustus Armeniacus Medicus Parthicus Sarmaticus Germanicus Maximus, Thoth 25. I Heraclas, son of Sarapion also called Leon, have made this contract and consent to all the aforesaid provisions. I, Thonis, also called Morous, son of Harthonis, wrote for him as he was illiterate.

The agreement is amusingly exact in its details, and one cannot but admire the minuteness with which the splendour of young Thonis's tunic is made to keep pace with his increasing wages. There was a sense of the fitness of things in the weaving trade at Oxyrhynchus in A.D. 182.

As interesting, and considerably briefer, is the contract by which Panechotes apprentices his young slave to the shorthand writer Apollonius. Panechotes is an ex-official, who has perhaps hopes of not being an ex-official all his life, and to whom a shorthand writer may come in handy when he gets back into office again :

Panechotes, also called Panares, ex-cosmetes of Oxyrhynchus, through his friend Gemellus to Apollonius,

writer of shorthand, greeting. I have placed with you my slave Chærammon to be taught the signs which your son Dionysius knows for a period of two years dating from the present month Phamenoth of the eighteenth year of Antoninus Cæsar the lord at the salary agreed upon between us, 120 silver drachmæ, not including feast-days ; of which sum you have received the first instalment amounting to 40 drachmæ, and you will receive the second instalment consisting of 40 drachmæ when the boy has learnt the whole system, and the third you will receive at the end of the period when the boy writes fluently in every respect and reads faultlessly, viz. the remaining 40 drachmæ. If you make him perfect within the period, I will not wait for the aforesaid limit ; but it is not lawful for me to take the boy away before the end of the period, and he shall remain with you after the expiration of it for as many days or months as he shall have done no work. The eighteenth year of the Emperor Cæsar Ælius Hadrianus Antoninus Augustus Pius, Phamenoth 5.

Father and son, even in those days, when fatherhood meant a great deal more power than it means to-day, were sometimes on sufficiently good terms to chaff one another. Trophimus, writing from Alexandria to his father Origenes does so in unusually vulgar Greek, and in spite of the names of the two, which remind us of Paul's Epistles and the early Fathers, their correspondence does not seem to have a very exalted tone ; but the pair are evidently quite good friends, and poke undignified fun at each other quite cheerfully.

To my revered father, Origenes, many greetings from Trophimus. Before all else I send many greetings to you and your consort Copria and Isidorus and Phullon

and Helene, and all our friends generally. You wrote to me in your letter that my boastfulness earns me the name of "Gift of Zeus," (Diodorus—a not uncommon name) because I sent you money; but I do not boast about what I sent you by Philoxenus. If you have sold the various things which I sent you, write to me in order that I may send you more. I have been idle here for two months, otherwise I would have sent you all some more. I am keeping for the trial the money that I have collected; for I am waiting for the memoranda. You wrote to me, "Petition against Polydeuces." If the memoranda come to me, I will petition against him and against Sarapodorus. If it seems good to you, send me a pot of oil. You wrote to me, "You are staying at Alexandria with your paramour." Write and tell me who is my paramour. I pray for your health. Deliver to Origenes from Trophimus.

Troubles and grievances were not unknown to the folks of these far-off days any more than to ourselves; and human nature sometimes comes in very curious fashion from the tattered old scraps of papyrus. What strange mystery of ill-nature and petty squabbling, for instance, lies behind this wail apparently from a distressed bath-keeper of the sixth century?

May your true brotherliness vouchsafe to cause the most illustrious Menas and Serenus the most illustrious banker, and Menas the agent to come to arbitration with respect to the bath, and let not the official leave them until the one of them who owes the rent of the bath agrees with the noble house to pay it. For Serenus the most illustrious banker through the persuasion of his wife chased the most discreet Colluthus out of the bath, and having done what he was persuaded to do will not depart. As the Lord lives I do not leave the three, but they pay

the rent of the bath until the deputy . . . To the most illustrious and honourable lord, by the grace of God my brother George, secretary, from Victor, by the grace of God. . . .

The serenity of the most illustrious advocate banker, Serenus; must have been sorely ruffled before, by the persuasion of his wife or without it, he chased the most discreet Colluthus, who certainly showed his discretion in his retreat, out of the bath; and altogether it seems a most unseemly scene to interrupt the quiet of a country town. One is curiously reminded of the sudden departure of St. John from the public bath at Ephesus when he saw the heretic Cerinthus entering: "Let us flee, lest the room should indeed fall upon us, for Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within." John, however, removed himself from the objectionable presence; Serenus, more intolerant, removed the other person. Some curious and doubtless petty story of private jealousies and hatreds, in which the women-kind of two households were even more bitter than the men, is evidently involved; but we know no more and never shall—not that ignorance in this case involves any great loss.

Another Victor, not the distressed bath-master, but an advocate, furnishes us with another curious proof, if such were needed, that human nature was much the same in the sixth century as it is in the twentieth. Victor the lawyer, as becomes his profession, is by no means so direct and forcible in his language as his namesake and contemporary the bath-master. Indeed, his letter is a quaint example of the stilted manner

of address of one professional man to another ; but he manages to make his meaning quite plain under all his cloud of complimentary epithets.

Your fraternal, illustrious learnedness ought to have helped my insignificance and not allowed me to be so far undone, and not only not to injure me and my insignificant property, but to prevent others who wish to do so. I have said this because my cultivators at Amoules have been put to such straits, and because of some camels worth a score of denarii. If we go to litigation and your fraternal wisdom says that the guard did this, you control the guard, and you ought to help me rather than to proceed against me and then leave the whole matter to my insignificance. God knows, I too could have injured an estate near Murmex belonging to the mistress of that guard, as I did on another occasion in the time of the honourable *comes* Paul, when I was injured once before by the inhabitants of Teruthis. Let me tell you then what you should do : be persuaded, whether they made an error or whether they did not, to have them released, so that I may not come to that or to other steps which might cause us vexation. I write this with due reverence. . . . To my master the most illustrious, most wise, worthy of all reverence, my dearest brother the most illustrious advocate, from Victor, by the grace of God, advocate.

Victor's complaints and threats are wrapped up in a vast amount of butter ; but one fancies that his dearest brother, the other most illustrious advocate would take his own way all the same.

When mere common folks who were not advocates by the grace of God, like Victor, quarrelled, they did not wrap up their enmity

in fine words, but went straight to the point, as this petition of the year A.D. 114 shows :

To Sarapion, strategos in the division of Heraclidas in the Arsinoite nome, from Tarmuthis, the daughter of Phimon, vegetable seller, belonging to the village of Bacchias, at present without a guardian. On the 4th of the current month, Pharmouthi, Taorsenouphis, the wife of Ammonius, also called Phimon, elder of the village of Bacchias, although she had absolutely no ground of complaint against me came into my house, and picked a senseless quarrel against me. Not only did she strip off my tunic and mantle, but she also robbed me in the quarrel of the sum which I had lying by me from the price of the vegetables I had sold, namely 16 drachmas. And on the 5th of the same month there came this woman's husband, Ammonius, also called Phimon, into my house, as if seeking my husband. Seizing my lamp, he went up into my house, and stole and carried off a pair of bracelets of unstamped silver of the weight of 40 drachmas, my husband being at the time away from home. I beg, therefore, that you will cause the accused to be brought before you for fitting punishment. May good fortune attend you. Tarmuthis, about thirty years old, a mark on the right foot. The 17th year of the Emperor Cæsar Nerva Trajanus Augustus Germanicus Dacicus. Pharmouthi 6.

The quarrel between Tarmuthis and Taorsenouphis was plainly a mere vulgar stairhead battle, though Ammonius, as an elder of the village, should have known better than to get mixed up in it to the extent of making forcible entry into a neighbour's house and stealing a pair of silver bracelets, which was scarcely setting a good example to the community which he adorned. But a very different vision is called

up by the report of the five Elder-priests of the god Socnopæus to the Strategos and Royal Scribe of the Arsinoite nome, dated A.D. 159-160. It suggests an Egyptian version of Chaucer's gay clerk, Absolon :

Crulle was his heer, and as the gold it shone,
 And strowted as a fan right large and brood ;
 Full streyt and evene lay his joly schood.
 His rode was reed, his eyghen gray as goos,
 With Powles windows corven in his schoos
 In his hoses reed he wente fetusly.
 I-clad he was ful smal and propurly,
 Al in a kirtle of a fyn wachet,
 Schapen with goores in the newe get.

The papyrus, alas, flatters only to deceive, and we shall never learn the fate of the gay Egyptian priest who *would* wear long hair and woollen clothing—we do not even know whether his taste in dress was due to the pride of life, or to the desire of an old man for comfort ; but surely it was the former, for the priests would doubtless have had mercy on a mere infirmity of age. Anyhow, here is the report, broken off, sad to say, at the very point where it begins to grow interesting.

Copy. To Hierax, strategos, and Timagenes royal scribe of the Arsinoite nome, district of Heraclides, from Pacysis, son of Satabus, and Panupis, son of Tesenuphis, and Panephremmis, son of Stotoetis, and Pacysis, son of Pacysis, and Stotoetis, son of Stotoetis, the five elder-priests of the five tribes of the god Socnopæus in the present 23rd year. With regard to the matter handed over to us for examination from the acts of the idiologos' administration, vol. iii, sheet 3, by which it is shown with regard to Panephremmis, son of Horus, our fellow-

priest, who has been informed against by Paseis, son of Nilus, on the charge of letting his hair grow too long, and of wearing woollen garments, to your inquiries whether these things are so, we report on oath by the fortune of the Emperor Cæsar Titus Ælius Hadrianus Antoninus Augustus Pius. . . .

But what they reported under oath is forever lost to us. Panephemmis, son of Horus, may have been a gay Lothario who was better out of the priesthood, or he may have been a doddering ancient who found the shaved head and linen robe of the priesthood too chilly for his thin old blood—we shall never know, or find out what was his fate.

The gayer side of life in these ancient days is presented to us by the various invitations to dinners, weddings, and festivals of all sorts which have been found in considerable numbers. Here is a cheerful and affectionate invitation from an Egyptian lady to her friend at Oxyrhynchus. The god whose festival was being celebrated was probably Serapis, and the date of the feast is about the end of the third or beginning of the fourth century.

Greeting, my dear Serenia, from Petosiris. Be sure, dear, to come up on the 20th for the birthday festival of the god, and let me know whether you are coming by boat or by donkey, in order that we may send for you accordingly. Take care not to forget. I pray for your continued health.

Petosiris and Serenia are evidently on familiar terms; sometimes the wording of the invitation is much more formal, as in the case

of this invitation to a dinner at the Serapeum, probably also on the occasion of a feast of Serapis :

Chæremon requests your company at dinner at the table of the lord Serapis to-morrow, the 15th, at 9 o'clock.

The hour is not so late as it seems, and probably is early in the afternoon, as is also the case in the wedding invitation which follows :

Herais requests your company at dinner in celebration of the marriage of her children at her house to-morrow, the 5th, at 9 o'clock.

Sickness and trouble came to the folks of the papyri in due course, and we have traces of the means they adopted to deal with such things. Sometimes the remedies belong to the sphere of legitimate practice, and show a decided improvement upon the medical prescriptions of the ancient Egyptians, some of which must have been almost worse, and a good deal dirtier, than the disease. One of the sets of prescriptions which has survived is concerned with earache, and part of it runs as follows. The opening word indicates that the preceding subject has been the same :

Another : Heat an equal quantity of beaver-musk and poppy-juice upon a potsherd, if possible one of Attic make, but failing that of . . ., soften by diluting with raisin wine, warm, and drop in.

Another : Dilute some gum with balsam of lilies, and add honey and rose-extract. Twist some wool with the oil in it round a probe, warm, and drop in.

Another : Pound some closed calices of pomegranates, drop on saffron-water, and when it becomes discoloured,

draw the liquor off. When required dilute as much as the bulk of a pea with raisin wine, warm, and drop in.

On the whole the prescriptions, at all events, seem harmless, and one can understand the soothing effect of the poppy-juice in the first, though what superior virtues resided in a potsherd of Attic make, rather than in any other bit of broken crockery, it is hard to understand. In any case, the patient had not to endure such horrors as his fellow-victim of the New Empire, for whom the following prescription was written in the Ebers Papyrus :

A large beetle, cut off his head and his two wings, warm him, put into fat, apply him. If then thou dost wish to drive it away, then warm his head and his two wings, put into snake-fat, warm it, and let the man drink it.

Even this is mild compared with some of the abominable compounds, mainly consisting of filthy and loathsome ingredients, to which the ancient Egyptian physician pinned his faith.

Egypt, however, was always the land of Magic, and very often the regular practitioner was thrust aside by one of the adepts in black or white magic. When the Egyptian of the Empire had a bad cold, he called in an exorcist, who gabbled over him an incantation like the following, which is found in the Ebers Papyrus :

Depart cold, son of a cold, thou who breakest the bones, destroyest the skull, partest company with fat, makest ill the seven openings in the head ! The servants of Ra beseech Thoth : " Behold I bring to thee thy recipe, thy remedy to thee ; the milk of a woman who has

borne a son, and the smell-seeds. Let that drive thee away, let that heal thee ; let that heal thee, let that drive thee away. Go out on the floor, stink, stink ! stink, stink ! ”

The Christian lady, Joannia, who was troubled with fever in the fifth century used slightly more seemly words in her incantation, and quoted Scripture ; but the spirit of the thing is not one whit advanced from that of the benighted heathen who called in Ra and Thoth instead of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Fly, hateful spirit ! Christ pursues thee ; the Son of God and the Holy Spirit have outstripped thee. O God of the sheep-pool, deliver from every evil thy handmaid Joannia, whom Anastasia also called Euphemia bare. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. O Lord Christ, Son and Word of the living God, who healedest every sickness and every infirmity, heal and regard thy handmaid Joannia, whom Anastasia also called Euphemia bare, chase from her and put to flight all fevers and every kind of chill, quotidian, tertian and quartan, and every evil. Pray through the intercession of our lady the mother of God, and the glorious archangels and Saint John, the glorious Apostle and evangelist and divine, and Saint Serenus, and Saint Philoxenus and Saint Victor, and Saint Justus and all the saints. Upon thy name, O Lord God, have I called, the wonderful and exceeding glorious name, the terror of thy foes. Amen.

Sometimes the incantation shows the most extraordinary mixture of elements—Heathen, Jewish, and Christian. It would not be easy

to get in so few words as preposterous a jumble as this. "Oror, phor, eloi, adonai, Iao, Sabaoth, Michael, Jesus Christ, help us and this house. Amen."

The same eclectic spirit is seen in the well-known incantation from the Paris Papyri. It dates from the third century.

A notable spell for driving out demons.—Invocation to be uttered over the head (of the possessed one). Place before him branches of olive, and standing behind him, say: Hail, spirit of Abraham; hail, spirit of Isaac; hail, spirit of Jacob; Jesus, the Christ, the holy one, the spirit . . . drive forth the devil from this man, until this unclean demon of Satan shall flee before thee. I adjure thee, O demon, whoever thou art, by the God Sabarbarbathioth Sabarbarbathiouth Sabarbarbathioneth Sabarbarbaphai. Come forth, O demon, whoever thou art, and depart from . . . at once, now. Come forth, O demon, for I shall chain thee with adamantine chains not to be loosed and I shall give you over to black chaos in utter destruction!

At least the patient upon whom this amazing incantation was tried got a good mouth-filling set of syllables for his money, if he got nothing else.

When neither medicine nor magic availed, and death came, the Egyptian had his formalities to go through, like ourselves, in the time of bereavement. The death-certificate had to be sent to the proper authority, something in the following terms:

To Julius, village scribe of Sesphtha, from Cephalas, son of Leontas and Ploutarche, of the same village of

Sesphtha. My son who is here indicated, Panechotes, son of Cephalas, son of Leontas, his mother being Herais of the same village of Sesphtha, died childless in Athyr of the present year. I therefore send this announcement and ask that his name be entered in the list of the dead as is fitting, and I swear by the Emperor Cæsar Marcus Aurelius Commodus Antoninus Augustus that the above statements are correct.

Letters of condolence would follow, sometimes expressed with genuine tenderness and sympathy, as in the case of the second-century letter of Irene, evidently a pagan, to the bereaved Taonnophris and Philo.

Irene to Taonnophris and Philo, good Cheer! I was as much grieved and shed as many tears over Eumærus (or the blessed one) as I shed for Didymas, and I did everything that was fitting, and so did all my friends, Epaphroditus, and Thermouthion, and Philion and Apollonius and Plantas. But still there is nothing one can do in the face of such trouble. So I leave you to comfort yourselves. Good-bye. Athyr 1.

Irene does her best, but there is nothing more remarkable than the contrast between such letters of the best pagans of the time, with their blank admission of hopelessness in the face of death; "So I leave you to comfort yourselves," and the Christian outlook of the same period.

Sometimes we can follow the fortunes of the bereaved family a little further, and the result is not always edifying. "How you loved one another," says Thackeray, "till you quarrelled over the £20 legacy," and human nature seems to have been much the same with regard to the

effects of departed friends in Egypt of the third or fourth century as in England of the nineteenth. It would be hard to find anything more cynical and hard-hearted than the conduct of the two brethren to whom Melas writes in honest indignation, sharpened, no doubt, by the thought of the drachmæ which he had expended, and for whose return he had but little hope.

(Melas . . .) to Sarapion and Silvanus . . . greeting. I dispatched to you through the grave-digger the body of your brother Phibion, and I paid him the costs of the carriage of the body, amounting to 340 drachmas in the old coinage. I wonder exceedingly that you went off so cruelly, without taking the body of your brother, but that having collected all that he had you then went off. From this I learned that it was not on account of the dead man that you came here, but on account of his goods. See to it therefore that you furnish the sums expended. The expenses are : the price of medicine, 60 old drachmas; the price of wine on the first day, 2 choi. 32 drachmas (old); for outlays in delicacies and foods, 16 drachmas; to the undertaker (for conveying the body) to the mountain, in addition to the payment agreed upon, one chous of wine, 20 drachmas; two choi of olive-oil, 12 drachmas; one artaba of barley, 20 drachmas; the price of a linen cloth, 20 drachmas; and of cost (for the transport of the body) as detailed above, 340 drachmas. Total of the account for the whole outlay, 520 drachmas of the old coinage. Total, 520 drachmas. You will take every care, therefore, to entertain the man who is about to convey the body with delicacies and a little wine and olive-oil, and whatever is in your power, that he may report to me. But do nothing. . . .

To Sarapion and Silvanus, brothers of Phibion,
Melas. . . .

Melas, who had evidently been looking after Phibion during his last illness, states his outlays in a thoroughly businesslike fashion; but he was singularly optimistic if he expected to get them repaid. Brothers who were cynical enough to grab their brother's effects and run off, leaving his body unburied, were scarcely likely to be much impressed even by the disgust and contempt which Melas so plainly displays. As to his request that they should entertain the undertaker with "delicacies and a little wine and olive-oil," when he arrived with the body, such simple faith in humanity has its humorous side; but one scarcely thinks that the undertaker would be much the better for his entertainment, when he brought poor Phibion's body, which nobody wanted, to his unnatural brothers.

Thus, then, these tattered scraps of old Egyptian papyrus bring back to us the whole picture of life as it was lived in Egypt during the closing centuries of the pre-Christian and the opening centuries of the Christian era. No such mass of intimate detail has survived from any period of ancient history; and indeed it may be questioned whether many periods even much nearer to our own can be illustrated so fully as this one is illustrated by contemporary documents. Great as is the literary and theological importance of the documents which have been discovered, one imagines that in time to come the supreme value of the papyri will be found to lie not in the fragments of classical and Biblical texts which they preserve for us, but rather in the unconscious revelations of the ordinary life of the period

which come through letters, contracts, notices, and agreements, and all the other papers which no doubt seemed to their original owners absolutely worthless, but which to us are priceless just because they reflect the natural thoughts, desires, and practices of an age which otherwise would be dead to us. No historian in the future can afford to neglect the amazingly rich store of detail which now lies to his hand for the picturing of this period ; and the historian who, with such a wealth of unconscious revelation of human nature waiting for him to use it, fails to bring the sparkle of real life into his pages, must indeed be a bungler in his trade.

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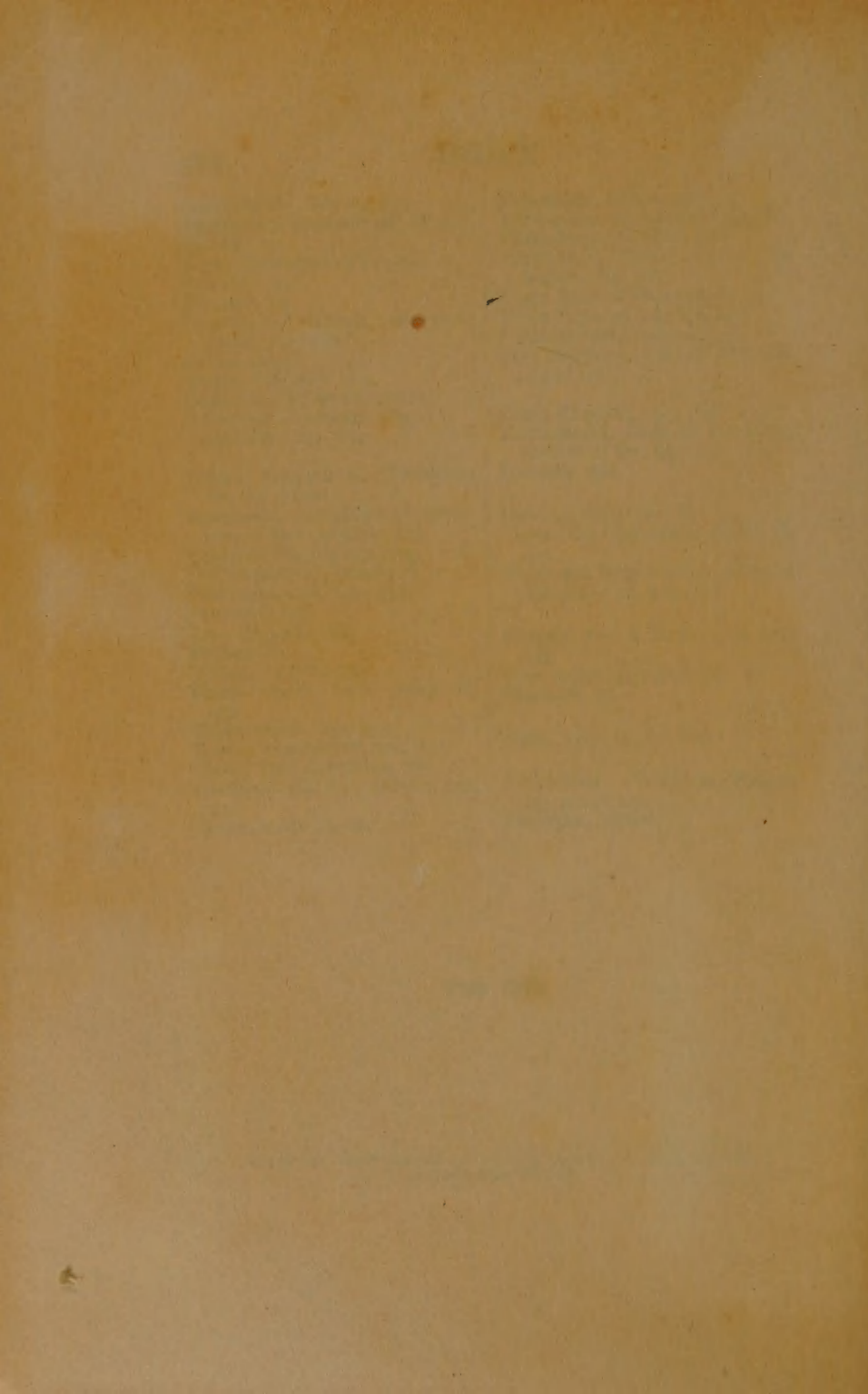
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